

Issue Six

The Roland Magazine

Britain's Best
Musicians'
Magazine

PowerOn



In the
studio
with George
Michael's
producer

V-Studios
Everybody is
getting them
– we tell
you why

VS-2480
The latest and
greatest hard
disc recorder yet

The Who
On tour
with their
Roland gear

“you’ve come a
long way
baby”
The Norman Cook Interview

Vintage Users ★ End User Scheme ★ New Bands ★ Texas

Brought to you by
 Roland
WE DESIGN THE FUTURE

POWER

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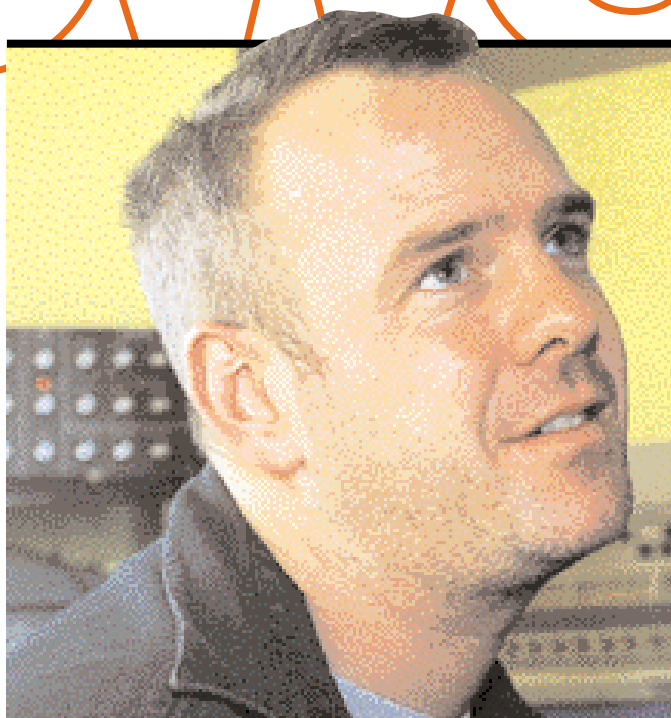
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Cousteau prepare for their launch in the USA

The music comes first. Always.

ON That's the reason behind the success of Roland instruments. Quite simply musicians like to play them because although they're driven by state of the art technology, this technology never gets in the way of the music. The whole culture of our company is geared towards making music: everyone seems to play something and with that comes a real understanding of what it's like to be a musician.

It's also why many professional musicians work with Roland equipment. In this issue you'll find what instruments George Michael, Texas and Fat Boy Slim are using to generate their distinctive sounds (and how they get the best from them too). And don't forget, they're all using exactly the same instruments you can find in your local Roland Authorised Dealers, so you too can benefit from the famous Roland touch.

You'll also find details on one of the biggest launches of 2001: the VS-2480, that is set to take Hard Disk recording to another level, while on page 12, Paul White, editor of *Sound On Sound* Magazine profiles the VariPhrase technology that is driving forward entirely new ways of making music.

Let us know what you think!

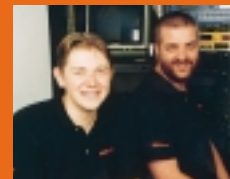
The team at Roland (UK)

PS In some issues you'll find a short questionnaire asking for your comments about *PowerOn* and the music market. We're really interested in what you have to say so please fill it in: there's no need to put a stamp on the envelope and you could win £500-worth of Roland equipment.

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News

News, people and new products

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

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Monday to Thursday 1pm until 5pm, Friday 1pm until 4.30pm

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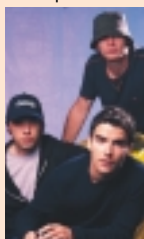
Roland MI Product Support. Telephone: 01792 515 022 Fax: 01792 799 644
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Rock on Tommy!

The VP-9000 has found itself yet another new home. Top producer Tommy D has worked with a number of well known acts including Catatonia, Right Said Fred, The Shaman, Björk, Eagle Eye Cherry and Toploader. Tommy called us to say that he had just taken delivery of his new VP-9000 incorporating VariPhrase and has immediately started working with it at London's Metropolis Studios.

A date with Stereophonics

Congratulations to Miss Ellie Stalker who will be meeting up shortly with the Stereophonics as her prize in the Tomorrow's World Show. Ellie was picked from over 10,000 entrants who entered the competition.



Paul Carrack

Paul Carrack, from Mike & The Mechanics has just finished the UK leg of his European tour. As well as using a VG-8EX to record his latest album **Satisfy My Soul** Paul also decided to take two VG-8EX's on the tour along with a JV-1080 and RD-600. Paul Copley (Keyboards and Backing vocals) said, "The VG-8's were fantastic. Paul is also using them for the European leg of the tour. They really opened people's eyes to the technology. It was amazing: one Fender Strat with a GK-2A pickup sounded like a hundred different guitars." Check out Paul's new album, he was so pleased with the performance of the gear, he gave Roland a credit. www.carrack.com

Roland pick up Rhythm magazine drum awards

As Roland becomes firmly established as one of the world's most important drum manufacturers it's great to see working drummers recognising Roland's quality. Readers of Rhythm magazine voted the V-drums and the HPD-15 as two of the top three electric percussion instruments of last year.



VP-9000

The VariPhrase that pays

In its first few months of release, the new VariPhrase VP-9000 has certainly made a big impression on the music industry. We've been delighted to hear from some of the biggest names in the business trying to get hold of the VP. The ever-growing list of VP-9000 users now includes:

Phats & Small recently called us to let us know that they had used the VP-9000 on their latest track 'Talk about me'. The song was originally due for release as a single this summer but their label has asked that they hold the track back for their forthcoming album.

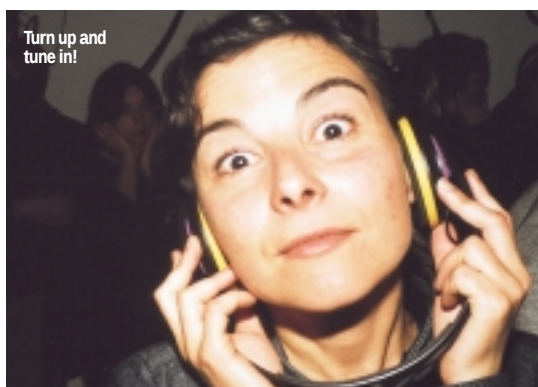
Liam Howlett (Prodigy), Pete Waterman, Midge Ure, Ronan Keating, Trevor Horn, Phats & Small, Leftfield and Jamiroquai.

Turn it up! Silent Gig

Cardiff band Rocket Goldstar performed what was thought to be the world's first-ever silent gig. With the help of Roland, they played to an audience of around 150 people on a headphone rig supplied by Promus International.

The gig was held in the art gallery of Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff and was well attended by the band's fans, and an intrigued press. Many people had come along after seeing the gig publicised on the local news.

As well as arranging the headphone rig, Roland supplied the band with V-Drums, JP-8000 and a VG8-EX. Digital Mixers Product Manager Paul O'Brien used the VMC-7200 and two VM-7200s to engineer the gig. Paul



used the onboard processing of the desk by inserting surround sound effects throughout the performance.

"It was weird, you walked into the room and there was the band playing their instruments but making no sound. All you could hear was Gaz the singer. As soon as you put the headphones on, there was

this full blown production going off in your head," said local DJ Steve Johnson.

Rocket Goldstar's record company FF-Vinyl have promised to set up another gig in one of London's Oxford Street bookstores later this year.

For further details contact FF-Vinyl on 02920 694450.

Roland at V2000

Last year's V-festival was yet another rock 'n' roll roaring success for all those attending, including Roland who participated behind the scenes at the Chelmsford site.

The back-stage artist bar was sponsored by Roland, Live! magazine, Rocket cargo, Budweiser and XXXX, and was the main chill out area for all performing artists and a few that had come just to see the show. Roland staff mixed with The Prodigy, Stereophonics, All Saints, Travis, Toploader and many more to re-affirm old relationships and build new ones.

"This is a great PR exercise and it allows us to catch up with the artists and crew who we are in contact with on a regular basis," said Aubrey Parsons.

OBSESSED WITH HADLEY...

Congratulations to the five lucky winners who have been sent signed copies of Tony Hadley's CD. Over 200 PowerOn readers entered the competition, which just goes to show there are still a lot of Hadley fans out there. Tony is performing a number of gigs in 2001 with John Keeble and Steve Norman from the original Spandau Ballet line up. Two confirmed dates are 5 April 2001 at the Purfleet Circus Tavern and 6 April 2001 at the Rochester Casino Rooms.

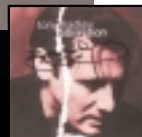
For more information, take a look at Tony's website:

www.tonyhadley.com

And for those of you who still want to know, the name of Tony's latest album is **Obsession**.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Emily Hutchinson, Harrogate. Lex McKee, West Lulworth. Margaret Edwards, Bearsted. Tim Hundy, Toddington. Mrs A Andrews, Rotherham. J Pugsley, Cardiff.



APOLOGIES TO MARTIN

In the last issue of PowerOn, we should have described Martin Levan as 'Sound Designer' for the new musical Toulouse-Lautrec. Apologies to Martin.

Who said punk is dead?

The Undertones, who played an important part in the 70s era in Ireland and the UK with songs such as 'Jimmy Jimmy' and 'My Perfect Cousin', have recently reformed to critical acclaim. Moving rapidly into the 21st century, the drummer (Billy) keeps time with his new TD-8K V-drum system. Billy also uses an old W-30 and a JX-305. "All the Roland products I have give faultless performance. They are extremely easy to use and give outstanding results".



The Undertones: reformed characters

Coming Thru My Stereo

Dance-music masters Hedrock Valley Beats appeared in the last issue of PowerOn's "What do you do with yours then?", and since then they have been experiencing life at the top. After the successful release of their single Coming Thru (My Stereo) the band have been regularly played on Radio One by Steve Lamacq, Anne Nightingale and Pete Tong. The single also contains a re-mixed version of the song by legendary producer Arthur Baker (Robbie Williams, Diana Ross, Fun Lovin Criminals). He contacted the boys and asked if he could re-mix the track after receiving a promo copy of the CD. PowerOn can't take any credit for their success, that's down to HRV's talent, but it's nice to know we were able to spot an upcoming band – before they were famous!

If you want to find out more about Hedrock Valley Beats contact their website www.hedrockvalleybeats.com



WORLD'S FIRST SINGING KEYBOARD Hits The Right Note

The VA-7 was recently launched by Stars in Their Eyes winning Freddie Mercury impersonator, Gary Mullen. Gary put the VA-7 through its paces, performing his favourite Queen hits at top London bar Noble Rot. Quite simply, the new Roland VA-7 allows you to record your voice and play back the lyrics via the keyboard to any tune, in any key and at any speed. This is because the VA-7 uses Roland's revolutionary VariPhrase technology which is already

being used in the studio by professionals such as Jamiroquai. Of course the VA-7 also boasts Roland's world beating sound quality, which has been helping professional musicians hit the right note for years. With hundreds of backing tracks, 16-track sequencer, Zip and floppy drive, D-Beam, Ribbon controller and many other fantastic features, it is not surprising that Tim Walter, General Manager of Roland's Contemporary Keyboard Division says, "This is the best keyboard we've ever

produced. Whether you're a giggling musician, a bedroom virtuoso or even fancy trying your hand at music for the first time, the VA-7 is the gateway to musical fun and creativity." Arriving shortly is the VA-5 keyboard – exactly the same as the VA-7, but without VariPhrase, aftertouch and the ribbon controller. For a free demonstration CD and brochure contact Roland on 01792 515 009 or visit your local Authorised Roland Dealer.

Summer of Love

Dance outfit Lonyo has just had a UK top ten hit with 'Summer of Love'.

Producer/engineer and all-round music-meister Gary Bromham told us he recorded the track with Lonyo using a brand new VM-7200 system he's just installed in his studio.

It pays to participate...

Congratulations to Daniel Lurcock from Maidstone in Kent.

Daniel recently visited our website and filled out our on-line Customer Service questionnaire. His name was drawn from over 1000 people who entered the prize draw after they completed the questionnaire. He chose an MC-307 as his prize. If you are a registered user, you will have received a copy of the questionnaire with this issue of PowerOn. Please take the time to fill it out and send it back to us. You will then be entered into a draw, with the chance of winning £500 (RRP including VAT) of Roland equipment. Give us a call on 01792 515 020 if you didn't receive your copy.

In Great company – Part 6

We like to think we keep good company at Roland and judging by this list of artists and bands who use our gear we're certainly maintaining our appearance and all because the products sound great...

Adrian Thomas, Mike Oldfield XV-5080
Alexander Goldscheider - Prague Philharmonic 3xVS-1680's
Andrew Strong VS-1680, Various Boss Pedals
Anto Drennen, Guitarist, The Corrs GT-5, VS-1680
Barry Manilow VP-9000
Barry Manilow JV-2080, GEB-7, A-90EX
Beautiful South 2xVG-8s
Billy (Drummer) The Undertones W-30, JX-305, TD-8K
Blondie JP-8000
Brian Kennedy VS-1680
Bush TU2
Catatonia JC-120, SP-808, SP-202, SPD-20, HR-2, OD-3, SYB-3, CEB-3, ODB-3, BD-2, TR-2, PSM-5
Cousteau VS-1680, V-Drum, A-90EX, VK-7
Culture Club VK-7, JC-120
Dan McGrath JV-1080, VS-1680
Danny Cummings V-Drums, HPD-15 Handsonic, SPD-20
Dave Stewart VK-7
David Gray MC-303, FP-9
Delirious XV-5080, TD-8K
Derrick McKenzie (Drummer) Jamiroquai TD-10, PD-80, PD-100, PD-120x3, KD-120, KD-7, VP-9000, SRJV-8014, SRJV-8012, SRJV-8018, XV-5080, JV-1080, JV-2080
Eddie Campbell (Keyboard Player) Texas VK-7, XV-3080, A-90EX, JP-8080, VS-1680+P
Eddie Van Halen 2xSDE-330
Everything but the girl V-Drums
Faithless JP-8000

Feeder VP-9000
Fergus Derrand (Drummer) Mel C & Spice Girls V-Drum, TDW-1, VP-9000, JP-8080, XV-88, HPD-15 Handsonic
Fil Eisler, Robbie Williams Band VS-1680EX, VSCDRS3
Gary Bromham (Producer) VMC-7200, 2xVM-7200
Gecko XP-60
Geoff Douglmore, Session Drummer V-Drums
George Michael VP-9000, XV-5080
Hans Zimmer 21xS760, JP-8000, JV-1080
James V-Drums
Jamie Townsend (Pete Townsend's nephew) EM-20
Jamiroquai VP-9000, XV-5080
Joe Perry - Aerosmith VG-8
Johnny Douglas (Producer) George Michael VP-9000, MC-505, XV-5080
Johnny Marr V-Drums
Josh Phillips VK-7
Kylie Minogue V-Drums
Leftfield VP-9000
Liam Howlett, Prodigy VP-9000
Lion King - The Musical TD-8
Macy Gray VS-1680
Mal Pope VS-1680, VM-3100
Manic Street Preachers VK-7, TD-8Kit
Martin Gifford, BBC Resources Unit VM-7200, 2x VMC-7200
Martin Joseph GT-3
Martin Levan (Sound Designer) Andrew Lloyd Webber VMC-7200, 2xVM-7200

Metallica JC-120, VG-8, JV-1080
Mickey Simmonds - Mike Oldfield, Fish V-Drums
Midge Ure VM-7200, 2xVMC-7200, TD-10, 3xPD-80
Mike Oldfield VG-8EX
My Vitriol VS-1680
New Order XV-5080, VP-9000, VM-7200
Nick Fyffe (Bassist) - Jamiroquai JV-1010, JP-8080, SRJV-8002, SRJV-8016, SRJV-8008, SRJV-8012, SRJV-8014, JV-2080, A-33, DR-770
Norman Cook AKA FatBoySlim VP-9000, SP-202
Omar Hakim V-Drums
Orbital JP-8000, TR-808, TR-909
Paul Carrack 2xVG-8, RD-600, JV-1080, 2xGK-2A
Paul McGuigan (Ex Oasis) VG-880, GK-2A, SRJV-8002, 06, HPD-15
Pet Shop Boys PC-200, JP-8000, JV-1080, JV-2080
Pete Waterman Ltd 4xVP-9000
Peter Oxendale (Producer, MD) VMC-7200, 2xVM-7200, 2xXV-5080, 2DS-90A, MC-80EX, SRV-30300
Phats & Small 3xVP-9000, XV-5080, SRJV-8008, SRJV-8010
Phil Taylor (Keyboards) - Tony Hadley A-90EX
Rabbit Bundrick (Keyboards) - The Who RD-600
Ray Fienn (Session Drummer) - Riverdance, Clannad, etc V-Drums, HPD-15 Handsonic
Ronan Keating VP-9000, XV-88
Sarah Brightman tour VSR-880, JV-2080, JV-1080, JD-800, V-Drums, 2xXV-3080, 6xM512E, nearly 20 SRJV expansion boards

Sasha DJJ-2000
Snake Davies, M-People XP-30
Spike Edney (Keyboard Player) - Queen & SAS Band XV-5080, XV-88
Spiritualized V-Drums
Status Quo V-Drums, DB-500, JC-120, BC-60, RD-600, VK-77
Stereophonics BD-2 (By the bucket-full), XV-88, KC-500, SC-88PRO, VS-890, V-Drums
Steve Howe, YES GP-100, FC-200
Steve Turner (Keyboards) Kylie Minogue A-70, 2xXV-5080, SRJV-8002, 04, 08, 16
Steve Washington (Drummer) - Texas V-Drums
Sting / Kipper VG-8EX, JP-8000, JV-1080, JV-2080
Super Furry Animals JP-8000
The Corrs VS-880
The Lovelies VS-1680, Lots of Boss pedals
Tommy D (Producer) - Catatonia, Tom Jones
XV-5080, SRX-1, SRJV-8002
Toploader SRJV-8008, CS-3, TU-2
Travis RD-600, JP-8000
Trevor Horn (Producer) VP-9000
UB-40 V-Drums
William Orbit MC-505

Want to know more?

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The tomorrow people



Midge Ure



Earl's Court, London was the venue for last year's *Tomorrow's World Live* exhibition. Befitting a live event based on the hugely popular BBC series (which attracts over 5 million viewers every week), the exhibition delivered an unforgettable day out and offered people the chance to explore the UK's most exciting and interactive showcase for innovation. A staggering 76,000 visitors passed through the doors during the five-day period.

At the Roland stand there was a full-blown stage production giving a technical insight of a gig. As well as product demonstrations there were live performances from the Roland Band along with singers and dancers from the Guildford School of Music & Drama. The highlight of the show was the appearance of music industry legend Midge Ure who talked about the engineering of a pop concert before performing his new single *Move Me*.

Roland was featured live on BBC1's *Breakfast* programme and the stardom didn't stop there. The *Tomorrow's World* special broadcast from Earl's Court featured the Roland Band, Midge Ure and Jay Kay from Jamiroquai talking about the new VariPhrase Sampler VP-9000.

This was one of the most successful shows to date, and we hope that the next *Tomorrow's World Live* show will be even bigger and better. 

Roland singers and dancers - Courtesy of the Guildford Academy of Contemporary Music



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more?

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We have something that belongs to you. If you've bought a new piece of Roland kit in the UK, you are entitled to 3 years warranty cover. All you have to do is get in touch and we will activate the extra cover.

Be honest, what's the first thing you do when you get a new piece of kit home?

Most of us rip open the box, get the gear out, plug it in and put the empty carton along with the manuals and any paperwork in the loft or garage. Then, after pulling your hair out for a few days trying to get the kit to work, the manual is finally retrieved and read. In your understandable haste to get down to the serious task of making music on your shiny new piece of gear, many of you forget to register your new product with us.

What happens if something goes wrong with the gear twelve months after the purchase date? The simple answer is this; if you have not registered the product, you will have to pay for the repair. If you register your product, you will be entitled to a full 3 year parts and labour warranty (5 years for Boss pedals).

Roland (UK) Limited understand that filling out warranty forms is the last thing you want to do when you're itching to play with your

latest purchase. That's why we have introduced two new simple ways of product registration for Roland products purchased within the UK.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

Access our web site

www.roland.co.uk

and click on the 'Product Registration' icon.

TELEPHONE REGISTRATION

01792 515020

call now and speak to a customer services representative who will take your details and register your products for you.

WE COULDN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER!

Please note that Hard Drives, CDRs and Speaker Chassis are not covered in the 3yr warranty

To register, please make sure you have the following information to hand:

Name
Address
Daytime telephone number
Email address (if you have one)
Product type
Date of purchase
The name of the dealer you purchased the product from
The product serial number

If you are registering for the first time, you will receive a welcome pack including:

WELCOME LETTER.

Membership card containing your personal registered user number which can be quoted when contacting Roland (UK) LTD

Voucher offering discounted subscription rates of up to 39% off titles such as Future Music, Guitarist, Total Film, T3 and more

10% discount vouchers for purchases from Extras Direct

Relevant product information and brochures

Extras Direct Catalogue

Automatic subscription to Roland's PowerOn magazine.

Once registered, we will also keep you informed of any relevant events that may take place in your area

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Email: support@roland.co.uk Web: www.roland.co.uk

Want to know more?

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fax: 01792 799644
email: poweron@roland.co.uk
Roland (UK) Ltd
Atlantic Close
Swansea SA7 9FJ

Customers who are considering the purchase of a Roland instrument from a company outside of the UK should be aware of the following:

1. POTENTIAL SAFETY AND FIRE HAZARDS: Roland instruments that are not manufactured for sale and use in the UK may have different electrical specifications and may require modification to operate using UK electrical voltage. The unauthorised modification of these instruments may constitute a safety hazard. In particular, the unauthorised modification of power may constitute a fire hazard.

2. NON-SAFETY CERTIFICATION: All Roland instruments manufactured for use and sale in the UK have been tested and approved to comply with consumer safety standards established by various product safety organisations. Non-UK Roland instruments may not have this important safety certification.

3. DISPUTES REGARDING SERVICE, WARRANTY, PARTS, AND RETURNS: These instruments may not be covered by any Roland UK warranties. You will have to contact the overseas dealer directly for sales, service, and warranty issues. In particular, Roland (UK) Limited will not be responsible for product or equipment returns. You will have to contact the overseas dealer directly to make such arrangements.

4. DISPUTES REGARDING NON-DELIVERY AND/OR IMPROPER OPERATION: Any disputes arising from the non-delivery and/or improper operation of these instruments must be settled with the overseas dealer from whom the product was purchased. Roland (UK) Limited cannot offer any assistance in negotiating any claims arising from these purchases.

Roland products that are manufactured for sale and use in the UK provide our UK customers with musical instruments that are of the highest quality, that meet and exceed rigorous product safety tests, and that are guaranteed by a 3-year warranty to perform as indicated. Roland UK Authorised Dealers are carefully selected for their commitment to superior customer service, before and after the sale. Therefore Roland (UK) Limited strongly recommends that customers purchase Roland instruments from UK Authorised Roland Dealers.



The Norman Cook **inte**



Norman Cook describes making his last album in seven months and how Roland products have helped him come a long way. Words: Aubrey Parsons

If all of this hadn't happened, what do you think you would you be doing now?

I'd be a fireman. It's similar to being a musician, you hang around not doing a lot and playing pool. Then you rush out and get a wave of adrenaline as you climb up the tree to save the cat and chicks dig the outfit as well.

Don't chicks dig you now?

Do you think I would be married to Zoë Ball if I was fireman? I wouldn't have even met Zoë Ball if I didn't do this for a living!

Were The Housemartins the first big thing for you?

Paul Heaton (The Beautiful South) phoned up one day and said 'we've got this tour and we think we've got a record contract – and the bass players left – will you do it?' I originally did it just to fill in, I thought it would be a laugh. The next thing I knew I was on Top of the Pops. Even though it wasn't my kind of music, it was hard to say 'I can't do this anymore – I'm going back to poverty and making records with a JX-3P!' The good side was I managed to get some money together to buy some new gear. When I left I bought an S-10 sampler which had a full four seconds of memory and an MSQ-700. Up until about two years into my career, every bit of gear I used was Roland. I still lean towards Roland. It used to be Akai for samplers and Roland for everything else; but my life has changed forever since I got a VP-9000.

Did you decide when you were going to make your last album or did the record company ask you to put something out?

Skint Records, my record company, said 'what do you want to do?' Bless 'em – they're mates of mine. Sony as licensee, haven't even got my phone number which means they can't badger me. Skint said, 'look, we realise the past three years have been pretty mental, it's up to you what you do.' I took three months off because I'd been on the road for two years. Then Zoë got pregnant. I either had to get an album out and promoted within a year or wait two years – which would be three years before it came out. Skint didn't mind either way but they said 'if you are going to do it, do it now!' We worked back from Woody's predicted date of the birth. I had to do three promotion. Which meant

the record had to come out in October, so it had to be finished by the end of August – that was my deadline. The last two months I was working six days a week; seven days towards the end. I used to get half an hour off to watch Big Brother and have my tea. It was nice to have the discipline; it was that kind of Radiohead syndrome, following up the biggest album of your career. I could have spent four years chipping away. You either have to come back quickly with something off the cuff or sit and scratch your beard for for years.

Did it worry you that *You've Come a Long Way, Baby* was so massive and you had to follow it up?

No, I made the decision early on that I didn't want it to be a 'better' album. I normally do my best stuff when I'm not trying too hard. If someone told me I had a month to write a hit single – after a month I'd still be scratching my head. But if someone asks me for a track to stick on a compilation album with just a couple of samples and a hook – that'll probably be a hit. I decided the only way I would make a good album was by not trying to make it better. A lot of the success of *You've Come a Long Way, Baby* came from taking all the bits from *Better Living Through Chemistry* that the public liked. I also introduced more of the crossover with rock, humour and gimmicks in the styles of music. I did that to death with the first two albums, so I didn't want to use the same formula for *Halfway Between the Gutter and the Stars*. People kept telling me working with real vocalists would be an interesting challenge as I hadn't done it for years. I wanted it to be a bit more song-based rather than sample-based. I wanted it to be played in nightclubs rather than just crossing over to radio. Basically gentle artistic suicide all round.

You chose to work with some big names in the industry...

Yeah, I'd done some work with Bootsy Collins in the past and we got on well. We're very much kindred spirits. I was quite daunted about working with 'names'. The Bonos of this world find it effortless to stroll into a studio and do a take. I think that if I was in a studio with a mega star I'd just sit in the corner and think 'bloody hell – what do I do now?' It was good that the first person I worked, I'd worked with

review

before and I knew that we'd have a laugh. Bootsy was an obvious choice. Then the record company asked me who was number one on my wishlist. I said I really liked Macy Gray. A week later I get this message; 'Macy says yes. When do you want to do it?' I was stunned. I was thrown in at the deep end with that one, but it turned out alright.

How did you write the track with Macy?

I sent her three grooves that I'd written. She came back and said 'let's do all three'. We wanted to record it here in my little studio. Unfortunately, our work schedules clashed, so we ended up recording in LA at Sunset Sound in the very room where The Doors recorded *Riders Of The Storm*. We had to explain to the engineers at the studio what we wanted to do and they had to re-patch the studio for us. Simon Thornton, my engineer and I have worked together for 12 years, we have this musical telepathy. I'll be doing something and I'll say 'shall we try...' he goes 'yeah... already done it'. A lot of the time, a raised eyebrow means 'bung a compressor across that...' Then all of a sudden we're in somebody else's studio. We didn't know our way round it. We didn't really know what gear they had or how to use it. We are so used to using ADAT. We were thinking we're trying to do all these different vocals with Macy, we've got the rhythm track on two tracks of the ADAT, the code on one track so that left us with five tracks for five passes. After that we were stuck. We only had two days to do the whole thing. Then someone told us we could slave up another two ADATS. We said 'OK – how do you do that then? We've only got the one at home... is that what those connectors on the back are for?'

Then I bought it all back here, dumped it all into the S3000 sampler and made it into a song.

And you obviously hoped that it would all work out?

No – the hoping was waiting for her to turn up on the first night. I was thinking 'I like her singing, she likes my rhythm tracks, but what if we've spent all this money flying all the way over to L.A. and hiring a studio, what if she sings something and it's dogshit? Do I sit here for three days and make nice noises then go home and quietly bin it? There was a worry that Macy would come up with something that we didn't particularly like. But even when we were getting headphone levels on the first day, the hairs on the back of my neck were standing on end – I knew right away that it was going to work.

What was it like working with Jim Morrison?

He was quiet. Actually, lots of people said it would be difficult to get permission to use his voice. I had demo'd the track a few years back for something else that hadn't come out, and before we went ahead with the album, we sent it to the Jim Morrison estate. We figured there was a 50–50 chance they would just say no. There are some people that you are just not

allowed to sample. But they were great. In the meantime the record company lost the bootleg of his voice that they were trying to get clearance for. So after getting the estate's permission we had to ask them for a copy of the sample, which of course they didn't have. In the end, we went on the Internet and found the president of the Jim Morrison appreciation society who had access to Jim's master tapes and he gave us a CD with the vocal on it. Jim's estate were very co-operative. I've no idea how much money the sample cost but I'm sure it was a substantial amount.

What's your favourite track on *Halfway Between The Gutter and The Stars*?

I haven't really listened to it since it was finished. I left it a month and listened to it once in the car just to remind myself what it sounded like. Since then I haven't listened to one note of it, apart from DJ'ing. When I was writing it, my favourite was *Song for Shelter* and I like the first track. Both tracks are my Pink Floyd concept album kind of thing, because most of the things I do are pretty much 'Verse Chorus Verse Chorus Middle Eight Verse Chorus structure'. *Song for Shelter* was the first time I put a reprise at the end. I was thinking 'god this is me being as close as I'll ever come to being a self indulgent triple album'. On the first track, the drums never come in. It was a declaration to everyone 'don't expect a load of *Rockefeller Skanks*. In fact, don't even expect to have drums on every track, and don't expect it to have any obvious chorus – I'm going deep here, man.

The album has a very sunset feel. It's appropriate that we're sitting here watching the most magnificent sunset over the channel. Is that where your inspiration came from?

Yeah, you can see for yourself. I normally start work at about six in the evening through till three or four the next morning. Over the Spring and Summer when I was writing the album, I was chilling out here, chatting on the phone and doing my business stuff. Zoë and me would watch the sunset and then she would pack me off upstairs to the studio. So, when I started work every night I was full of sunset vibes and I think that's apparent on the album with all the sunset references.

Are there more albums in your head or is that it?

I've finally done the difficult third album so now I'm on a roll. I think I could do this for the rest of my life, I mean I can't really have musical differences with myself. Also the 'Fat Boy' project allows me to do pretty much what I want. I can work with singers if I like. I can do dance music, or pop and as long as I don't have to do power ballads I can do pretty much what I like.

Are you going to keep off the pseudonyms for a bit?

Yes, I think at 37 it's too late in life to go back and start again, play toilets and talk people into letting me put a record out. I've done it four times now. And, I seem to have built quite

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOKS...

Half of Norman's studio is taken up with vinyl. Not just a few albums lying around haphazardly, but a whole wall full from floor to ceiling. These make up the basic ingredients of Norman's recipe for success. Small pinches of tracks sprinkled liberally into the mixing machine that is his studio which makes food for our ears. So how does Norman know which records have the sounds he needs? Surely, everything is logged on a database that can be accessed at the touch of a button?

Well... er... no. "I don't have a computer; I don't even have email. The closest I get to email, is text messaging from my mobile phone."

So how does he keep track of all his records and the samples that he uses? Norman reaches across the small desk that is home to his Atari (yes he still uses an Atari with *Creator* to produce all of his music) and pulls out two small black books...

"These books have over ten years of notes about all of the samples I have used. The BPM of the track and roughly where the sample is on the record. All of my vinyl is stored alphabetically and by music style. The system's worked fine for this long, I don't see why I should change now!"

Daydream believer – Fat Boy relaxes in his recording studio



a reputation as 'Fat Boy Slim'; so it would be silly to destroy that and start a new one.

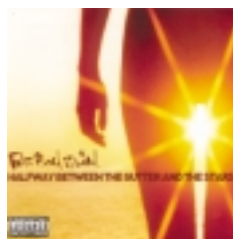
You are currently fully daddied up with Woody and loved up with Zoë, what are your plans for the rest of the year?

I'm still travelling to promote the album, but I'm doing it in short sporadic bursts. I've got quite a lot of commitments in America and Australia. One week a month I go off on a long trip. Apart from that I'm doing a track for the new Baz Lerman film, *Moulan Rouge* and I might be producing a real band.

A real band with real instruments?

Yes but I'm not telling you who. Because of the baby I won't be launching back into my own records. It's great fun making records, but promoting them can become a bit of chore. Especially worldwide. Promoting a record in the UK takes a month. Promoting worldwide takes two years.

At this point, the phone rang, and Norman's nanny Jacky came into the room to tell him the lead singer from the band he wouldn't tell us about was on the phone. Norman blushed because the game was up, but I'm afraid this reporter won't be spilling the beans – you'll just



Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars – TRACK LISTING

- 1 Talking bout my baby
- 2 Star
- 3 Sunset (Bird of Prey) – Featuring Jim Morrison
- 4 LoveLife – Featuring Macy Gray
- 5 Ya Mamma
- 6 Mad Flava
- 7 Retox – Featuring Ashley Slater
- 8 Weapon of Choice – Featuring Bootsy Collins
- 9 Drop the Hate
- 10 Demons – Featuring Macy Gray
- 11 Song for Shelter – Featuring Roland Clark & Roger Sanchez

Fat Boy conjures up some more magic from his library of little black books



GEAR LIST:

SD-2000
CR-78
CompuRhythm
Alpha Juno 2
Juno 106
MSQ-700
PC-200
SC-88
SH-2000
SP-202
RE-201
TB-303 x3
TR-909
VP-9000
VS-1680

OK

"...We've just had a page in OK magazine, not that we flirt with that kind of thing. We got the Valentine of the year award, not for being the most famous, but seeming to be the most happy. I like the fact that the public see us as happy genuine people. I don't mind that I'm not number one in the charts as long as we're happy."

Why Norman?

"I wanted a name that could be shortened. (Real name Quentin Cook). I wanted a grumpy old man's name. When I was in the Housemartins, we were all wearing cardigans with this grumpy old men image. Everyone else in the 80s was wandering around going 'Hi, I'm young with big hair, rolled up sleeves and big shoulder pads'."

England v USA

"...Americans are a lot more slapstick. It's less about getting your head down, looking cool and having a cosmic experience, and more about waving your arms around and showboating. It's like a rock gig."

Want to know more?

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Swansea SA7 9FJ

"Up until about two years into my career, every bit of gear I used was Roland. I still lean towards Roland. It used to be Akai for samplers and Roland for everything else, but my life has changed forever since I got a VP-9000"

have to wait like everyone else to find out who it is later this year!

Out of all your gear, what is your favourite... before I could finish the sentence Norman butted in...

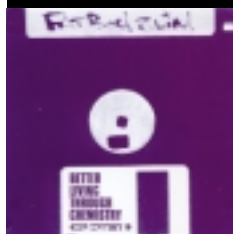
Oh, the 303. [He reached inside his shirt collar and pulled out a silver chain with a miniature silver TB-303 on it.] It was a wedding present from my best mate.

You wrote a track called *Everybody needs a 303*. Are those your sentiments?

No – it's just that the sample said 'Everybody needs love'. I don't think everybody needs a 303 in their life. I definitely do. At one point the track was called everybody loves a 303 – which I think is true. Deep in his heart of hearts, I think even Jonathan King has a sneaking admiration for it. I used to play guitar, but I never really got off on collecting them and showing them to people. They were just something I played and did solos on and made faces whilst I played. But when I'm tweaking the 303 I do actually make funny faces. It's my equivalent of the Telecaster. I think a lot of people in dance music feel the same. For me it's the most expressive electronic instrument there is.



Fat Boy's 'looser' album (above) entitled *You've Come a Long Way, Baby* and Fat Boy's first album (below) *Better Living Through Chemistry*.



Who was the Fat Boy on the cover of the *You've Come a Long Way, Baby* cover?

I don't know. He was someone who had his picture taken at a Fat Convention in America in about 1985. At that point the album was going to be called Viva La Underachiever. I thought it would be really good to be a complete slacker, sitting at home playing with my 303 and not bothering about being successful.

Have you had enough of success or would you like more?

I don't want anymore. I wouldn't like to just stop it now because I would have terrible withdrawal symptoms, but I don't want it to get any bigger than it did. That's why I wasn't worried about things coming down a peg or two. It means I get a bit of my life back. I'm a big fan of Moby, just for taking the heat off me! I'm not a big fan of his music, but all the things I don't want to do – he does.

Finally – you and Zoë are seen as one of the few happy showbiz couples. Are you happy being in the spotlight?

Now we don't live in London we're not in the spotlight that much. But we'd rather be known for having a showbiz marriage that's working rather than just a big showbiz marriage. ■

The new world

When Roland unveiled its brand new VariPhrase technology in the VP-9000 it created a storm. Paul White, Editor of Sound on Sound magazine explains why...



In my formative years, before music got its hooks into me, I was very interested in magic. Not the black candles and goats' entrails type, more your 'pick a card, any card' variety. I was fascinated by how smooth and flawless some minor miracle could be made to appear by the application of some cleverly thought-out trick. And that's just how I felt when I first saw the VP-9000 VariPhrase demonstrated, because outwardly, it seemed to deliver the impossible – and I wanted to know the secret behind the trick.

The VP-9000 can sample, but sampling is a prerequisite for its 'trick' rather than an end in itself, so it would be quite pointless to do a feature-for-feature shoot-out between the VP-9000 and any conventional sampler. It can pitch-shift, but unlike a typical studio rack processor, it works using the samples it has taken, it doesn't do real-time pitch-shifting. What it does enable you to do is sample vocal or musical phrases and then pitch-shift, formant shift or time stretch them with an unprecedented degree of realism.

'Audio made elastic' is the phrase that Roland uses, and why not, that's exactly the effect achieved. The machine includes formant manipulation for changing voices or for making voices sound consistent when played back at different pitches while its six voice architecture allows complex vocal harmonies to be played from a MIDI keyboard or sequencer.

Though designed with vocals in mind, the VP-9000 also works well on many musical instruments, which is why Roland has just released Zip disks of sax and brass sounds to use with it. The machine can also change the speed of recorded drums, or even add swing to a drum part.

The VP-9000's secret is that it doesn't just apply a blanket treatment to the audio it is processing. Anyone who has heard a conventional pitch-shifter will be more than aware of artifacts such as pitch warbling, glitching, atonal modulation and 'Mickey Mousing.' Let's face it, pitch-shifting isn't easy, and an algorithm that works well for a sustained monophonic note might fail abysmally when applied to a polyphonic part

or to a transient sound such as a drum.

Roland uses a refinement of conventional pitch-shifting where audio is cut into short segments, each of which is either looped when dropping the pitch or shortened when increasing the pitch. Cross-fading is used to help hide the joins. The main difference is that the VP-9000 examines the audio, then creates a 'map' of where the best splice points are, taking into account transients, repeated waveforms, and so on. In this respect, it's not unlike a non-real-time computer plug-in. The attack of a sound will, therefore be treated differently to the sustained portion – a consonant will be treated differently to a vowel. The really cunning part is that once the sound has had its electronic 'third degree' and the map has been created, the VP-9000 can apply this map in real time to produce extremely smooth pitch-shifting. The original audio isn't changed but the analysis data is saved along with the sample. Samples are saved to an internal 250MB Zip drive (or optional external SCSI drive). It's also possible to load Akai, WAV, AIFF and Roland

S-700 samples from library CD ROMs.

Sample pitch can be altered without changing tempo, or vice versa, solo vocal lines can be stripped of their pitch information and then forced to a new melody under keyboard control, loops recorded at different tempos or in different keys can be made to sit together in perfect harmony. Automatic loop tempo and pitch matching are included to speed up operation and a single note sample can be played back polyphonically over a wide keyboard range without the need to multi-sample. This latter feat is only made possible by Roland's approach to formant processing, which means that sounds can be increased in pitch without sounding Mickey Mouse or they can be dropped in pitch without sounding demonic in any way.

In addition to the pitch and time processing, there are effects to enhance the audio, such as reverb, chorus and multi-effects while Pitch, Time and Formant/Groove knobs allow the essential audio parameters to be controlled in real time. Another feature of this kit is there's a full



of VariPhrase

CRASH TOUR

The VP-9000 is a rack mount unit that combines sampling and audio processing in such a way that samples can be played back with independent control over length, pitch and formant. It is designed to be used in conjunction with a MIDI controller or sequencer but has controls for real-time adjustment of length, pitch and formant and is also able to add swing to drum parts, create harmonies and fit together musical loops and segments originally recorded at different tempos and/or in different keys. The user interface is largely intuitive and, because all the processing is applied to the samples in real time, none of the original samples are changed in any way at all.

complement of MIDI sockets as (I imagine) the VP-9000 will most often be controlled from a MIDI keyboard.

Though the VP-9000 isn't strictly a sampler, it still has sampling at its heart, and samplers need memory. There's a 8MB of RAM on-board, and this can be upgraded to 128MB. The voice architecture is six-voice polyphonic and six-part multi-timbral (stereo samples use two voices) where samples may be up to 50 seconds long (mono) and half that in stereo. The maximum sample length doesn't increase if you have more memory, you just get to play back more parts at the same time. A Phrase Map can automatically organise up to 72 Phrases (12 per part) onto consecutive MIDI notes for convenient real-time triggering.

The Sound

The most important thing about the VP-9000 is the sound. Does it sound natural? That depends on what you do with it. Single vocal lines can be stretched in time and/or pitch while still sounding surprisingly natural whereas my first impression was that polyphonic voices had a bit of a 'vocoder' quality to them. This turns out to be largely because the pitch-shifting is far more precise

'Audio made elastic' is the phrase that Roland uses, and why not, for that's exactly the effect that is achieved

than you'd normally find in a group of singers singing in harmony, but you can use subtle detuning and other tricks to make the result far more plausible if you need to. As with any tool, you need a little experience to use it effectively.

Hearing drums changed in pitch over such a wide range is quite weird, and though you can do a similar thing with sampler REX files or Groove Control files where individual beats are mapped to individual MIDI notes, hearing it from a hardware processor with no sequencer trickery is amazing. If this doesn't impress you, hearing the same drum rhythm with a swing groove should nail it!

So, who needs one? Anyone into remixing should appreciate the fast and effortless way in which grooves from different sources can be tempo matched, and they should also be able to make use of its vocal stretching capabilities to force awkward vocal phrases to sit perfectly over their new backing. In the studio (or live), you can create smooth harmony vocals or you can completely change the character of a voice, post-production studios can use it for dialogue fitting or creating special effects, jingle writers can use it to squash away those excess seconds – the application list continues to stretch much like the audio being processed! ■

Want to know more?

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Engineer not included



Roland transformed the field of hard disk recording with its VS-840, 880, 1680 and 1880. Now the VS-2480 is unveiled: the new member of the VS family is the most powerful yet. Words: Mars Hopkins

VS-2480

24 track/24-bit/96kHz
Digital Studio Workstation

Price: £2999 including 40Gb hard drive
Price: £2699 without hard drive

It's difficult to remember what life was like for recording enthusiasts and musicians prior to 1996. Tape based multi-tracks ruled the roost and, boy, didn't we know it. Yes, there were hard disk recorders out there but they weren't exactly cheap, and then you had to work out how to use them.

That was before the V-Studio revolution supplied affordable and powerful recording solutions that were also easy to use, to over 300,000 project studios, artists and bands worldwide. Grammy nominated albums have been produced on V-Studio systems meaning that if you're thinking about getting involved – welcome to the family, you're in very good company.

What is the one thing that all musicians

have in common? Apart from a dislike of early mornings, it has to be that regardless of musical style, it's vital that the very essence of a performance is captured as cleanly and painlessly as possible, and once it's laid down, that's where it stays. This is a fact that hasn't gone unnoticed by other manufacturers, and the result is a vast array of products competing for your attention.

In a way, that's good news since it means that more people than ever are producing music, and with the absorption of the Internet into popular culture and self publishing just around the corner there has never been a more exciting time to be involved – for more than one reason.

Making its debut at the NAMM show in Los



The superb VS-2480: turning heads at the NAMM show

Angeles, the VS-2480 has electrified the industry with a features list that's nothing short of astounding. Amassing the knowledge of over six years experience gained at the cutting edge of hard disk recording development, the VS-2480 is a heavyweight product that is already punching well above its weight.

Here are a few reasons why:

24 tracks – an obvious one you may think, but also tremendously important. With more and more gear featuring multiple outputs, even the more modest studio can quickly run out of available tracks at mixdown. 24 tracks beats 16 every time, whichever way you look at it.

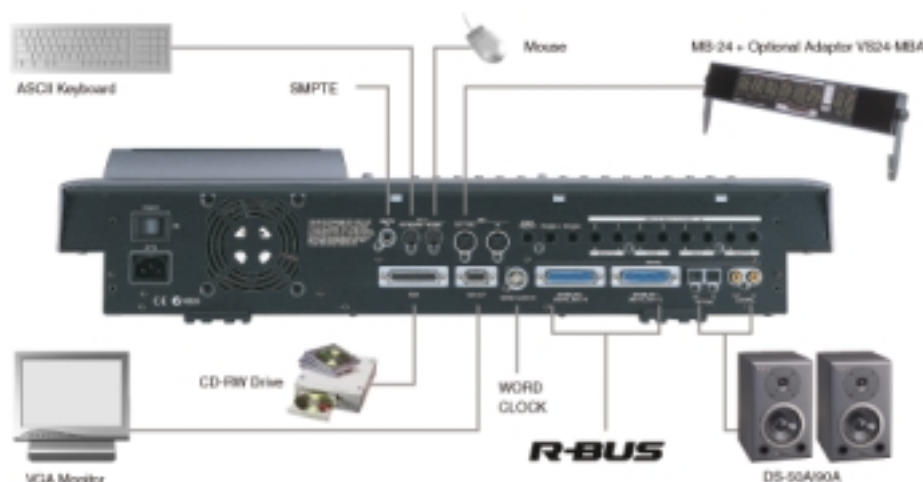
The best bit? It costs only a little more than many comparable 16-track models, but brings so much more into the equation. When it comes to your music, economy is sometimes a high price to pay.

Specifications – A staggeringly powerful specification list. Remember the days when 16MB seemed a lot of memory to have in your PC? And petrol seemed good value for money? (now we are going back a bit).

Things move on at breakneck speed, especially in the music technology industry. By packing in innovations such as the R-Bus standard and surround sound mixing alongside industry benchmarks such as 96K compliance and a connectivity list to die for, the 2480 will be ready for you no matter what level you're at. UK 2480s come with a 40GB hard drive, but should you need more (there's always one) you can slam in up to 128GB, for recording times in days rather than hours.

Ease of use – The 2480 is the flagship in a family of hard disk recorders that have become renowned the world over for their ease of use. Everything that has been picked up along the way has been assessed and a simple question asked. Does it make your life easier? If so, then it's in. Innovations such as EZ routing, advanced automix facilities, total recall of all system settings including the input gains and the ability to connect a keyboard and mouse make this one of the most intuitive products to use available anywhere. Less time messing around, more time on your music.

Effects – The backbone of a dedicated HDR system is undoubtedly the quality of the effects, and the 2480 comes bristling with a list of the most diverse, yet eminently usable effects algorithms ever assembled in one place. From Guitar/Amp modelling to a mastering toolkit dedicated to perfecting your post-production mix, V-Studio effects are amongst the best in the industry. And



FULL SPECIFICATION

RECORDER

Siml Play Tracks 24 tracks Play@ 24-bit MT-Pro/1/2, LIV, 12 tracks Play @ CDR, M24/M16, or 96 kHz
Recordable Tracks 384 (24 tracks x 16 V. tracks)
Simultaneous recordable tracks 16
Sampling Rate 96.0 / 88.2 / 48.0 / 44.1 / 32.0 kHz
Recording Mode Multitrack Pro (MTP), CDR (CDR), Mastering 24-bit (M24)
Mastering 16-bit (M16), Multitrack 1 (MT1), Multitrack 2 (MT2) Live 1 (LV1), Live 2 (LV2)
HDD: 3.5" IDE
Max. HDD Capacity 128GB
Max. Size of a Song 10GB/partition (3768 tr min: 157min x 24tr @44.1k, MTP)
Marker (per song) 1000
Direct Locate (per song) 100 (10 bank x 10 point)
Undo / Redo 999 Undo / 1 Redo
Mixer Fader 17 (60mm Motorized)
Mixing Capability 64 (24 Input, 24 Track, 16 FX Return)

Bus 34 (16 Rec Bus, 16 (8 Buses + 8 Paths) 2 MIX (stereo))
Number of Inputs 36
Analog Mic / Line 16 (XLR/TRS x 8 + TRS x 8)
Digital S/PDIF 4 (Coaxial, Optical)
R-BUS Input 16 (R-BUS x 2)
Hi-Z Guitar In 1 (Input 16)
Number of Outputs 32
Analog Master 2 (1/4 inch TRS)
Analog AUX 4 (1/4 inch TRS)
Analog Monitor 2 (1/4 inch TRS)
Digital S/PDIF 4 (Coaxial, Optical)
R-BUS Output 16 (R-BUS x 2)
Phones 4 (stereo x 2)
A/D-D/A Resolution 24-bit
Internal Processing 56-bit
Channel EQ 4-band (2 Shelving + 2 Peaking)
Dynamics Compressor / Expander
Surround Mixing (Multi-speakersystem) Scene 100 (10 x 10 banks)

Effects 2 Stereo (expandable up to 8 with VS8F-2)
Phrase Pad
Playback 24 voices mono
Trigger Pad 24
Max. Playback Time Up to Max. Phrase Length (< 24h.)
Sequencer Function 24 tracks (1 voice per track)
CD-RW Audio CD Burning, Data Backup/
Recover, Import/Export .wav file Others
Display 320 x 240 dot (backlit LCD)
MOUSE
(PS/2 Mouse Included)
ASCII KEYBOARD
VGA Out 640 x 480 VGA Out, 256-color
MIDI In, Out/Thru
Word Clock In SMPTE In
Dimensions 620(W) x 520(D) x 138(H) mm / 24-7/16" x 20-1/2 x 5-7/16"
Weight approx 12kg (incl. HD) / approx 26lbs 8oz

The VS-2480 is a heavyweight product that is already punching well above its weight

what's more up to four effects boards can be installed in tandem, giving eight stereo/16 mono effects simultaneously.

VGA output – The 2480 accepts VGA compatible displays from desktop monitors to 42" plasma screens, displaying information in a more familiar format. In conjunction with the mouse and keyboard, you could almost be using a PC – with one difference. Say goodbye to those crashes.

Expandability – Roland creates concepts not just products. Since defining the hard disk recorder market, a wealth of supporting peripherals have also evolved to ensure that you'll never run out of options. From superfast CD-R burners to the myriad possibilities of R-Bus, the 2480 is as flexible as it is fun to use.

Support – Should all this technology cause you to blow a fuse, don't worry. We've been through it ourselves. As a Roland user, you are entitled to dedicated technical support from one of the best teams in any industry – and it's all free. One phone call and we'll have you back on track.

In fact, the only way we could make this all in one studio any more authentic, would be to include a tea boy as part of the package. And we're working on that one too!

The VS-2480 is scheduled to land in the UK from June onwards.

Want to know more?

tel: 01792 515020
fax: 01792 799644
email: poweron@roland.co.uk
Roland (UK) Ltd
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Johnny & George

Johnny Douglas has worked as a producer and songwriter for some of the biggest names in the business including Tom Jones and Tina Turner. Aubrey Parsons met up with him as he was preparing to work with George Michael on his forthcoming album...



Johnny Douglas relaxes
inbetween producing
more top tracks

As I entered the production studio Johnny started apologising for the mess, "we were going to clear up the studio before you came, but to be honest this is how it is all the time. We thought you might as well see how we work". The studio was crammed to ceiling with keyboards, computers and sound modules; most of the gear on show was Roland kit, old and new.

AP. How did you get started in the business?

JD. When I was kid I was into singing and songwriting, I wanted to be the next George Michael. When I was older I got myself a cheap publishing deal for three or four grand – really bad splits. Another singer songwriter Connor Reeves signed on the same day as I did. When I heard him singing I nearly gave up there and then. I packed in the singing and just wrote tunes. Everyday I sat in my publishers churning out songs, I did 200 a year. That's how I learned to use equipment. I also used to DJ and play heavy metal guitar, I did covers of Bryan Adams and AC/DC. And I liked Stevie Wonder and Quincy Jones's music, so I had this great mix of musical tastes. But I steer clear of the engineering aspect of music production. I'm there to get the sound, I leave the technical stuff up to my engineers.

AP. You've worked with some great people and you are still only 30.

JD. Yeah, touch wood. I've been booked up solid for the last five years. When I began, I couldn't get a record past 24 in the charts. It was a standing joke. Then suddenly everything started to go well. It's hard work, but it only takes one success and everything spins off from that. The only trouble is that everyone wants me to reproduce the same record (*Fast Love* – George Michael). If you've just worked on a record that has sold millions the next company you work for says 'We want the same record/formula'. I'm into too many different kinds of music to work with a constant formula. If I was just making R&B or 2 Step all day, I'd go really mad and think 'I might as well go and work in a bank!'

AP. How did you get to work with George?

JD. I was working here at SARM West studios with a girl called Lisa Moorish, she had the idea to do a cover version of *I'm Your Man*. George was working in Studio Two about a week before we started on the track. We got T-shirts printed, like the old 'Choose Life!' Wham! T-shirts, and sent one down to him. It worked, he came up to the studio listened to the track and loved it. One day he called me down and played me *Jesus To a Child* and a few other tracks and asked me if I wanted to do some stuff. I ran around for ten minutes as if I'd won the pools. I did *Fast Love* and *Spinning the Wheel* on the album. Now we're working on the new album.

AP. How do you normally work?

JD. With George we start from scratch, and what we start working on becomes the finished product. We'll normally get a rough track of music and he'll sing stuff over the top of it. The track builds up four or five lines at a time. We set George up so he's self sufficient in one room with a RADAR (Hard disk system), mixing desk and effects, I work separately on the music. If the vibe isn't right the song doesn't progress and we go on to something else. We have to knock up tracks quickly to get a vibe going, but they have to be good enough to make a record.

Some of the acts Johnny has worked with:

George Michael
All Saints
Kylie Minogue
Damage
Lynden David Hall
Eternal
Louise
Boyzone
Tina Turner
Tom Jones
Gabrielle
Bootsy Collins
911

Kit List

First deal: D20 & U220
Old gear: JUNO 106, JV-80, U-220, Vocoder.
Fulfilling childhood dreams gear: MKS-80's, JUNO 106
Up-to-date gear: JV-1080's, JV-2080's, XV-5080's, stacks of expansion cards, MC-505's, JP-8000 and the VP-9000

What's Kylie like to work with?

I've just done three tracks on the Kylie Minogue album, including *Spinning Around*. I used the same technique that I use with George – blank canvas. I had to suss out what she was about and what she stands for; where her old fan base was and where her new fan base will be... It's like a science. Then you put it in a pot and give it back to the artist and they can represent their music and it all fits. She's very cool and professional, really easy to get on with and has the best arse in the world. The hot-pants in the video were my idea. She did a video years ago wearing a pair and I told her that I thought it was her best video. We had a big hot-pants discussion and the next thing I know, *Spinning Around* comes out. She sent me a text message saying 'The hot-pants worked! I think the male population of this country owes me for that!'

AP. So you're both working on the same track at the same time but in different rooms?

JD. Yeah. If I make any changes to any part of the track, we just dump a stereo track down to the RADAR for George to work with. We then bounce everything over to ProTools and carry on working.

AP. How far have you got with album?

JD. Were at the point where we've got about 18 tracks which embrace many different styles of music. Now we have to look at all of the tracks and decide how we are going to make them different to the previous albums. You can't just write a trance record and put George on it; it will just sound like everybody else. His records have always got something different about them. We are bombarded by so much music these days that your senses can be dulled. And it's important that he has his own sound.

AP. How long will it take to finish the album?

JD. It's really hard to say. Sometimes tracks happen in a matter of days, but they can take months. I have a lot of other projects on the go at the moment, but I can't let anything get in the way of George's album because it's the most important thing. But if George says to me he's off to LA for a week's break, I'll carry on working on my other projects. I still need to be getting records out. I don't want to disappear for two years while I work with George. I have to keep my profile up by keeping tracks in the charts; the only way you can keep new work coming is by having hits – and you're only as good as your last hit. Getting back to the point, I think the album will take at least nine months to complete.

AP. Do you get a buzz when you switch the radio on and hear your tracks?

JD. Oh yeah, I remember listening to the radio one day and I had three different tracks played by three different artists back to back – that was great. But without sounding blasé, you kind of get used to it, and then if you don't have a track in the charts you get annoyed. It's great when you switch the telly on and hear some of your music in the background of the Queen Vic or in the café on Coronation Street.

AP. Have you got any unfulfilled dreams?

JD. I'm really desperate to break America. I've had some pretty big successes in the UK and Europe, but the US is a whole continent that needs to be conquered. I'd also like to work with some heavy rock bands like Limp Bizkit. Both projects would be big challenges for me. 

Want to know more?

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Why the VP-9000 has changed Johnny's life

Both George and I have VP-9000's which we've been using a hell of a lot. When he first brought his into the studio, I thought it was a bit of a gadget. Then I got so used to using it I had to get one myself. We've got about 18 rough track ideas and bits of melodies that we've put onto the VP-9000. We take a loop like a bass break from an old funk track, put it into the VP and play around with the keys. You can hold the key down and change the chord without re-triggering the sample from the beginning – that feature has transformed my life. All of a sudden we can play a break and start playing different chord changes. Without the VP, if you had a break beat, you were more or less stuck with it and you'd have to work around the beat. If it was an 8 bar sample, you would have to change the vocals to fit over it. Now we can take the beat and twist it. It makes samples 50 times more flexible and it's saved us so much time. If I had to get rid of it, I don't know what I'd do. It's a really exciting bit of kit. There are no rules to VP. It does so many different things, and it's great for experimenting with.

Roland

Roland has been producing electronic musical equipment since 1971. That means there's a heck of a lot of 'retro' Roland gear out there, and most of it is still being used. This issue sees the introduction of a new feature based around those of you who are still using your favourite piece of kit from days of old. Robin Johnson, editor of Live! magazine and a regular contributor to Making Music, describes his relationship with the Roland R-5 Human Rhythm Composer



Talk of Juno synths, ARPs, Moogs – and many other old means of producing assorted burps, bleeps and farting noises – and words like ‘classic’ and ‘vintage’ are tossed about like confetti. Old is good, right? Or, should I say, old is currently the fashionable thing.

But what about gear that’s in that odd period where it isn’t old enough to be deemed ‘vintage’ yet isn’t young enough to be the latest technology?

That sort of covered-in-dust-in-a-box-under-someone’s-bed era that technophiles don’t really like to talk about.

Yet, from that period, there’s a lot of equipment that’s well-specified, fully MIDI’d up (unlike ‘60s gear) and still produces some pretty damned fine sounds. An example is the Roland R-5 Human Rhythm Composer (drum machine, to you and me) and its senior sibling, the R-8.

When I was a kid, a drum kit was entirely out of the question. So I taught myself to play bass guitar instead. Being rhythmic and noisy, it was an acceptable alternative.

Of course, underneath I still wanted to be a drummer. But, at that time, the sort of facilities I wanted only really came courtesy of the infamous Linn drum synthesizer – at the price of a small house. So I started a wee bit smaller and invested in a Boss DR-220A Dr Rhythm. The sounds were reasonable but the limited number of programmable patterns and a measly single crash cymbal soon had me champing at the bit for more.

Then came manna from heaven – Roland launched the R-5 and the R-8. I read the

specs like a kid in a (expensive) sweetshop. The R-5 and R-8 would even play out of time, just like a real drummer! The R-8 was out of (financial) reach, but the R-5 was just within my grasp, so in March 1990 I trundled up to Kingfisher Music in High Wycombe and got my mitts on one. I read the manuals (note the plural) on the train home. In reality though, it proved pretty straightforward to do almost anything with.

Being a big fan of good old fashioned rock drumming (Nigel Glockler, Tom Hunting, Rat

“Despite many advances in drum machine technology... the R-5 has remained my No.1 rhythm source. The sounds really are superb and stepping up to computer-based MIDI sequencing proved no problem for the old girl”

tro



R-5: The Human Rhythm Composer

Scabies and Chester Thompson are my big musical heroes), I soon had it set up with a principal kit composed of twin bass drums, three different snares, eight tuned toms, hi-hats, two rides and no less than nine different crash cymbals (yeah!).

Despite many advances in drum machine technology during the intervening ten years, the R-5 has remained my No.1 rhythm source. The sounds really are superb and I'm pleased to report that stepping up to computer-based MIDI sequencing proved no problem for the old girl.

On the down side, somehow china cymbals and a decent splash cymbal were completely missed off it, while the sidestick is dreadful, so I get these and other assorted percussion from an SC-55 Sound Canvas (still using one of those, too) and samples. The R-5 also suffers from irritating regular MIDI ERROR messages, requiring re-setting each time.

Considering I've simply never found a better set of drum sounds for the sort of programming I do though, I completely forgive her these minor foibles. And it's still on its original battery!

An R-5 can be picked up for a couple of hundred quid secondhand. It might not be fashionable and it might not be the very latest gear, but it doesn't half sound good. Dust one off and give your ears a treat.

What's your favourite piece of Roland Retro gear?

Drop us a line... There's a goodie bag in it for you if we print your letter.

R-5 features included:

68 drum and percussion sounds
16 bit dynamic range
RolandUS
RNuanceS
parameter
26 additional copy instruments for varied parameters from original sounds
100 pattern / 10 song memory
Dynamic pressure sensitive buttons

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Synth, sounds and samplers

Roland user Adrian Thomas talks about his first Roland Jupiter 4 and making sounds with the JD-990 and JD-800...

"My first synthesizer was a Roland Jupiter 4. It had eight presets and eight user memories and after they were used up, it was back to good old pen and paper. The first sampler that I bought was an Ensoniq Mirage. It came with a few disks and I slowly amassed a collection of 50 disks with three to six sounds on each one.

I now own four synthesizers and three samplers. Every time I start a new project I rigorously search through my sound libraries to find what I need, which can take more time than writing the actual music!

There are many orchestral sounds out there, but I'll let you in on a secret. I have found the Holy Grail of orchestral CD-ROMs. The best library is a two disk set from Roland. Here you'll find beautifully recorded sections and good solo sounds. It's very difficult to get hold of (I bought mine in Boston). I often use Symphonic 1aS with Silky Strings from the JD-990. This trick of using samples and synth sounds together is often the key to realistic orchestral tracks. You get the individual character of the sample with an ambience and sheen from the synth sound. Roland's Orchestral Percussion library has some enormous sounds in it.

The 'Gronkas' (a mixture of bass drums and timpani) will give you the action-movie vibe and the cymbals and crotales are bright and shimmering.

As for Roland synth sounds from the last 20 years, here are my faves. Try using Pizzagogo (D-550) with Pizza Hutt (JD-990) for an explosive techno sound. The JD-990 and JD-800 may not be Roland's most popular synths of all time, but every time I come across one, I find that the owners haven't changed any of the superbly programmed factory sounds. Dawn Sweep (JD-990) will always remind me of the albatrosses taking off in the TV series *Life in the Freezer* and Lovely Vox Pad from the JD-990 features heavily on *Tubular Bells III* as does Arco Strings (D-550) which provides an arse-shaking bottom end when put through the PA."



AP Your first solo album *Strong* was released in 1993. What have you been up to since then?

AS I've done a lot of gigging with people like Lenny Kravitz, The Rolling Stones, Bryan Adams and Elton John. Since *The Commitments* there have been three solo albums and I've guested on another two artists' albums. There was the rugby national anthem with Phil Coulter and a few commercials for car companies as well as Coca-Cola®.

AP You've just finished recording the latest album, what's it called?

AS *Out of Time*. It's named after one of the old Stones' tracks from their 1996 *Flowers* album.

AP Is it all covers?

AS Yeah, I was going to do some original tracks mixed with a few covers but I decided that would just confuse people. So I went back to the record company and asked for more money to make it a dedicated covers album – they loved the idea. When you listen to my last album you can hear a lot of anger and frustration, *Out of Time* is much more laid back.

AP When did music really take hold?

AS I was about 12. My first band was a covers band called Perfect Strangers. We did Free, Sam Cooke, Joe Cocker. Then I worked with an original band which was a bit more serious, after that came the movie... that was ten years ago.

AP Your dad Rob is a very well known singer in Ireland. Would you say he was a big influence on your voice?

AS Aye, because that's what reared me in a way, him going out gigging and making money... It made me think, 'let's give this a try'. When I was at school I wanted to be an architect because I loved old buildings, but that went out the window when I got into music. Now my younger sister's got music on the brain, even though she was never interested in it before.

AP You are primarily known for your voice, but what other instruments do you play?

AS I started playing guitar 'live' five or six years ago. People will always identify me as a singer, and that's the way I want it. I don't care if people don't know I play other instruments. As long as this (points to his vocal chords) is in shape that's all that matters to me. You can replace a broken guitar string but you can't replace your voice!

AP Do you use any BOSS or Roland gear?

AS I do, believe it or not. I have a GT5 and loads of BOSS pedals. I'm really into customised pedals too. I love all these weird hippy guys from America who make strange pedals. I also use Rodger Mayer gear. I like the old BOSS chorus pedals. I use BOSS equalizers and delays. I love the hardness of BOSS gear. I have a very simple guitar sound – I usually only use three pedals at a time. In the studio, I use the GT5 for weird effects, it

Truly comm



Andrew Strong crashed into our lives at just 16 years old as Deco Cuffe in *The Commitments*. Aubrey Parsons sinks some Guinness with Andrew in Dublin and asks the Ginger Growler what he's up to...

has some phenomenal stuff inside it, the pre amps are great. I just don't have the patience to use it live. I love the simplicity of BOSS pedals, just volume, tone, drive and that's it. It makes life easy to adjust sounds on the fly when you're playing live. I use the GT5 in the studio. You can get great sounds without having to set an amp up, you just plug it straight into the desk and off you go.

AP Have you used any Roland Hard Disk recorders?

AS Yeah, I used the VS-1680 when I helped my sister out with her album. We recorded drums, bass, guitars, vocals – everything. It's a tremendous piece of equipment and for what it costs... If you were to buy a normal analogue studio with a desk, recorder and effects it would take up loads of room and cost a fortune. This little thing has it all in the one box. It would be even better with moving faders, but then I guess we'll just have to wait and see what you guys come up with next!

AP I hear you have your own 32-track studio?

AS Yeah, it's set up at my home. It's just a small studio. I'm not going to tell you what make it is (he laughs) but it's great. I like having my own studio. A lot of bands save up to go into a big studio, do a four- or five-track demo then wish they'd done a different mix and they've ended up with higher than expected costs. Having your own gear means you can do all your pre-production and try out different ideas at home. Then you can launch yourself at a big studio with a big SSL system and hopefully get it right first time.

AP You've released an album of original material that is available through your web site, what can we expect from that?

AS I love all kinds of music. My record collection has albums from Pantera and Sepultura to Junior Brown, Chick Corea and Jacko Pastorias. I enjoy making contemporary music and the great thing about putting music on the net means you can really explore the music as an experiment. But I love good aggressive rock! It's not very commercial, but once you break that market, it's huge. Look at Metallica, I know it took them a while to break it but they have the best fan base of any band. If you're a Metallica fan, you will kill yourself for that band... What appeals to me is what sounds good, but I do like rock. Saying that, you can't beat a good ballad.

AP You spent a lot of time in America. Who did you work with?

AS Well a friend of mine owns the House of Blues clubs and he asked me to go sing in them. So off I went and started working with Steve Cropper and Duck Dunn (*The Blues Brothers*). The first time I met Steve Cropper he came up to me and said "Hey man, thank you so much for recording my songs, because I needed the money..." (Andrew bursts out laughing). That's what he said to me, really openly and I'm like wow, Steve Cropper needs money! They're lovely guys, I played with them in Boston and L.A. I was on stage next to Bruce Springsteen, John Fogerty, Eddie Floyd, Etha James and Paul Rogers from Free... It was a great experience; something I'll never forget – it was a great craic, an absolute pleasure.



itted

AP Are there any plans to tour off the back of the album release?

AS Yeah we will be playing a few festivals in Europe as the album is released. Later we will release in the UK then Ireland; we should be playing in the UK by the end of the summer.

AP How will the tracks be released?

AS Well all the original material will be released through my web site www.andrewstrong.com.

AP What about next year?

AS I might try and release another album, but I'll probably do another movie, a friend of mine has just finished a script he's been working on for years, it's up to the backers now... If all that comes off I'll be fairly busy.

AP I've heard there may be a sequel to *The Commitments*, will you be involved?

AS A sequel? I dunno, some things are just better off left alone. But who knows, the script might be ten times better than the original or it could be a complete flop. It all depends on the script. I just thank God I can make money at a profession I enjoy. It's nice to sell a lot of records and make loads of money but at the end of the day I'm motivated when I can do what I want to do.

AP There are a lot of people around that have been influenced and inspired by your voice. What advice can you give to anyone wanting to have a crack at the music business?

AS Just believe in what you do and work hard. In this day and age you don't get anything for free. Make sure you have people around you who care about you. The main thing is to keep positive and the doors will eventually open.

AP And finally, you've already worked with most of the greats, is there anyone you would still like to work with?

AS I'd love to meet Chris Cornell from Soundgarden. I think he's absolutely phenomenal. He's a great songwriter. There are tons of producers and artists out there, but what that guy does really gets me going. 🇬🇧

Want to know more?

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Photo: Barry McCall

Ask the Experts



Product Specialist:
Neal Tomlinson

Product Specialist:
Wayne Davies



How to get the most out of Roland's customer service

1. If you can, write down your question before you call. That way it's easier to explain what the problem is and we will then be able to help you quickly and thoroughly.
2. We often have to give out detailed information so it's a good idea to have a pen and paper handy to scribble down some notes, which you can refer to later.
3. If you can, have the actual equipment to hand and switched on when you call so we can talk through any solutions over the phone. If this is not possible, at least have a manual nearby as a reference.
4. If you are after an update, try connecting to our website at www.roland.co.uk. Most of our updates are available for you to download straightaway.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

With immediate effect, Roland's telephone product support department has new opening hours.

Monday to Thursday 1pm until 5pm, Friday 1pm until 4.30pm

These new opening hours will enable the product support team to deal with the increasing number of email requests coming through the Roland website.

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Email: support@roland.co.uk Web: www.roland.co.uk



The Roland Product Support Department is here to answer all your technical questions. Send your queries to: Ask the Experts, PowerOn, Roland (UK) Ltd, Atlantic Close, Swansea SA7 9FJ or email support@roland.co.uk

Q If I copy more than 15MB (one or two songs in playable format) to Zip I get the 'disk memory full' message. I use a standard Zip drive and 100MB discs, formatted from the VS-880. I'm using lots of discs!
Ed Board – Reading

A The display on the unit is showing 15MB but if you calculate this out in time, a song will not fit in this space. It is trying to show you that your song is 150MB in size, but the unit does not have enough characters on the screen to show full detail. Zip and Jaz storage media is expensive so it may be worth investing in the VS-CDRS2 unit. Initially, this is more costly but the media cost is less than £1 per 640 MB.
NT

Q What instruments and tones are available on the VG-88 and GR-33?
Mark Dickinson – Leeds

A The two products are slightly different in terms of what they offer. The GR-33 offers 384 sounds ranging from pianos to strings to brass, all of which can be triggered via a guitar. The VG-88 offers accurate modelling of guitar and amp types and has 260 patches on board.
WD

Q My son has a Roland RD-600. I gave him a midi interface so he can connect the RD-600 to his computer. This records from the RD-600 but won't play back midi files. How do I ask the computer to 'talk' to the RD-600?
George Omur – Leicester

A Your computer needs to be told to output MIDI data. Assuming this is a PC, in Control Panel/Multimedia/Midi (this is the series of places to go) select MIDI OUT as the option and press APPLY. It may vary on your soundcard, but generally it's MIDI out or MPU-401.
NT

Q I'm considering importing a TD-8 kit into the UK from Europe. Are there any differences in the language or power requirements? And in the event of a problem, where can I go to fix it? My nearest Roland stockist of V-Drums is over 200 miles away which is why I'm looking at mail order. The best price I've received so far is from abroad.
Paul Rowe – Coventry

A Importing any unit from abroad means that your manual may be in a foreign language (we don't supply replacement manuals free of charge). Power variations can also be an issue. The warranty

Weron

is covered by the dealer that the unit is purchased from, and covered by the Roland distributor in the country it was bought from. If you purchased it in Germany for instance, Roland Germany will be your contact in the event of product failure. Products bought in the UK are covered by a three-year warranty that is only offered in the UK. Look at our End User Scheme on page 26. **NT**

Q I own a VM-3100 mixing desk, I intend to buy the VS-1880 and I'd like to know how to connect the two units. Can you also clarify the purpose of the RMBD and the digital I/O inputs/outputs? Thanks.
Steve Oaks

A The easiest way to connect the two units is via the SPDIF Digital out on the VM-3100 to the Bi-directional Digital in on the VS-1880. The purpose of the RMBD port is to give you 8 digital ins and outs. To use this in conjunction with your VS-1880, you would have to purchase an ADA-7000 D/A, A/D converter. **NT**

Q I am just starting to get interested in home (electronic) music recording. What Roland equipment would you recommend for the home recording beginner? Is the MC-307 a viable choice or overkill for a beginner like me?
Paul Smith – Middlesex

A The MC-307 is a fine choice for a beginner. It works well on its own and works equally as well when integrated into a computer based system. It's nice and simple to operate

and the sound is great. **WD**

Q Is there an update to the original VG-8 (I already have the first update, which I think is called the S1)? Thanks in advance.
Richard Mills

A If you have the key from the S1 update then all you need is a service and update from Roland to give you VG-8EX specifications. **NT**

Q Can you tell me where I can get the best B-3 organ sound for XP-80 JV-1010? I'd like something which is comparable to VK organ sounds.
Wayne Gray

A Check out the expansion board SRJV-80/08, keyboards of the 60s and 70s. **NT**

Q I have a JV-2080 with 4 expansion cards – is it possible to fit all four into an XV-5080? And what equipment do I need to connect from the R-Buss socket to an ADAT input on a Yamaha 02R desk?
Martin Medina

A The XV-5080 has 4 x SRJV expansion slots and 4 x SRX, so your JV boards will fit. You will need the DIF-AT unit to enable your XV to talk to the 02R. **WD**

Want to know more?

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Letters

Several years ago I bought a JV-80 keyboard. It was a great keyboard – even greater after I expanded it!

About a year ago I had problems when the glue that holds the weights in the keys began to deteriorate and messed everything up. I took the keyboard down to an authorised Roland technical person, Chuck from Pro Audio Clinic in Kailua-Kona. Though I didn't think he could do anything cost-effective with the keyboard and was already resigned to purchasing another – not a Roland.

I was delighted when, within a week, Chuck had talked to the people at Roland and my keyboard was made almost brand new again for the mere cost of shipping charges for parts. I am so happy with this turn of events and promise that my next keyboard will be a Roland.

Thank you for your great service.

Brad Ballesteros – Hawaii

Glad we could help you out Brad!

Please bring back the Round Jupiter 8. The JP-8000 and JP-8080 are great, but they are not the same. What we really want is the Jupiter 8 – phat, phat and more phat!

We hope to see a 61 key Jupiter-8 version 2 released at Winter NAMM 2001.

James – Sheffield

Thank you for your e-mail James. We often get letters and e-mails from people asking us to bring back Jupiters, Juno's, TB-303, TR-808 etc...

Unfortunately there are many reasons why you will never see the re-release of old Roland products.

If you have ever looked inside the casing of the Jupiter series, you will find many discreet components, and miles of wiring, the Curtis chip which was used in these units is no longer available, and many of the old components were discontinued by their manufacturers many years ago. Old components are part of the reason they sound as they do.

If we were to release a product like the Jupiter today it would cost around £5,000, more than most would pay for a 6- or 8-voice analogue synthesiser. For the tens of people who say "I'd pay that", tens of thousands would think otherwise.

Older equipment has a lot of kudos attached to it. If we were to re-release any products the mystique and value of the old kit would disappear and it is probably better to maintain rather than destroy this.

The Roland philosophy is that we go forward not back and I think we would all prefer to leave the products of the past as collectable vintage items of desire.

Songwriting in style

Guitarists and songwriters will love this exciting new kit from Boss. Joe Bennett gets creative with the BR-8 Hard Disk Recorder and JS-5 JamStation

I can't get on with manuals. You get your lovely new kit out of its box, plug in your guitar and the last thing you want to do is read a long, technical book. Sure, we ought to make sure we fully understand the equipment before using it, but I for one am just too impatient – I want to be making music right away!

The BR-8 and JS-5 have both been designed with people like me in mind. The idea is that you can be creating music within a few minutes of getting the product out of the box. The BR-8 is an 8-track portable recording studio, with an easy-to-use front end and loads of guitarist-friendly features. The JS-5 JamStation is an automatic backing track machine with variable chords and a digital recorder built in. So, here we go – can we get through this whole article without opening a manual?

BR-8

8-track digital recorders have been with us for some time now – Roland's VS-880

broke the mould back in 1996 with its combination of high sound quality, digital editing and on-board multi-FX. The Boss BR-8 uses the same technology as the VS series, but features a simplified front end, giving you the best of all worlds.

Recording with the BR-8

When most people use a digital studio for the first time, two things confuse them – signal routing and output busses. These allow the engineer to plug an instrument into channel 2, for example, and record it on to track 7. While this versatility is vital within a huge studio with multiple input channels, it's simply not necessary on a home recording machine. With this in mind, the BR-8 doesn't use any routing system at all. Just select the track you





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want from the eight buttons on the front, and that's the track you record on to.

To make recording guitars easier, there's a jack input on the back which can be switched to guitar mode. One press of the Effect button pulls up the BR-8's COSM amp simulation and multi-FX (it's the same as on the GX-700 and GT-3). All the speaker emulation and virtual mic placement is taken care of, so all you do is plug straight in – instant, pro-standard guitar sound straight to tape (er, disk).

Drum – and bass!

If you want to hook the unit up to a sequencer or computer, it will send MTC (MIDI Time Code), saving you on track space if you're programming your own drums. For those who don't have the extra gear, or just want to sketch quick musical ideas, there's a simple on-board drum machine with 50 pre-set patterns that runs in time with your recording without using up tracks. If you're afraid of using on-screen menus to set it up, just press the 'tap' button a few times at the speed you want, and the tempo is set automatically. My electric bass was out of commission when I first got my BR-8 so I had to do all the basslines using a Strat and the on-board bass simulator.

This is more than just a pitch-shifter, sounding more natural and 'woody' in tone. The click of the Strat pickup gave a very pleasing Precision-like sound that fooled more than one bass player who heard the tracks.

JS-5

Having all this recording technology at your fingertips is all very well, but if your songwriting's no good, no-one will want to listen to your music. The JamStation is the first product of its kind to combine a programmable 4-part backing machine with an on-board audio recorder.

Songwriting

Most guitarists write songs by starting with a chord sequence and singing or playing along to see what comes out. This is an excellent way to create new ideas, but is limited by the fact that a strummed rhythm guitar isn't always the best inspiration, and we're all limited by our knowledge of the instrument (be honest, do you avoid D#mMaj7 in your songs because of its sound – or is it because you can't remember the fingering?!)

The JS-5 does away with any such problems by providing the musicianship for you, giving you the chance to get on with the all-important creative stuff.

Once you've chosen a tempo and a style, you only need to tweak three things – the current section (intro, verse, chorus, fills), the chord root note and the chord type.

Best of all, you're not limited to the dreadful Bossa Novas and 6/8 ballads of the home organ generation. The JS-5 gives you a complete range of musical styles, from grungy rock sounds to TR-808 hiphop and drum 'n' bass, making it a tool for the contemporary musician with an eye on the charts. Of course, for us rock dinosaurs, there's a good selection of classic styles for those Thin-Lizzy-meets-Led-Zep seven-minute pentatonic solo extravaganzas (don't worry, the unit includes a headphone socket, so your secret's safe with me).

Audio

Once you've composed the chord sequence, you can record yourself playing or singing along using the on-board audio recorder. This takes guitar, mic or line-level input, and with a SmartMedia card added can give over an hour's recording time. The audio is stored when the unit's switched off too, giving you the option to take your JamStation to the next band rehearsal to demo your work.

Making music

Used in isolation, either unit is going to push your creativity further, and this is made even easier because the front end on both is so simple to use. Combine the two together and you've covered the whole creative process, from initial ideas and demo (JS-5) to recording, editing and mixing (BR-8). There's nothing in the manual about how to write a successful hit, but you don't need that, do you? 

'The BR-8 and JS-5 have been designed with people who dislike manuals in mind. Now you can create music within a few minutes of getting the product out of the box'

How do you mix a 40-piece orchestra along with a cast of dozens for a live radio broadcast? Get yourself a VM-7200 and find out

Interviews: Aubrey Parsons

Vital

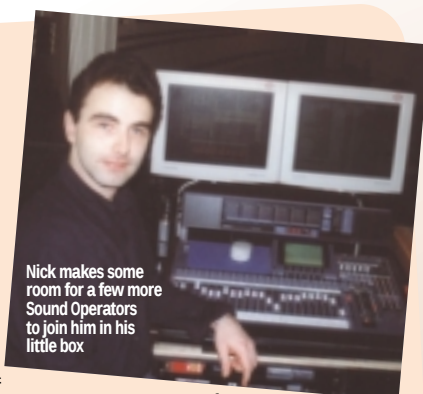
Nick Sagar

Front of House Engineer on 'The Beautiful Game'
Words: Robin Johnson, *Live!* magazine

"The main factor in the musical is that the overture and the football match itself

are from playback so we're combining quite a bit of live and recorded sound. The Roland VM-7200 desk is being used to mix and route the individual elements of playback and effects throughout the various different parts of the system. Our system is built so that we can send anything that's coming through to the Roland VM anywhere in the house."

In the future, Sagar sees many more shows being put on in similar 1200-seat theatres and regards the size of the VM system as a key aspect for future theatrical use: "We've got a small sound area here, but we're still taking up 18 seats, which the producer would of course like to sell. If you can daisy chain a couple of these desks together and use the system for the whole FOH system, you can take out less seats and the producers will be happy! For the operator, the automix feature means that you just lock SMPTE up, press the GO button and it mixes the playback elements for you. That leaves me free to concentrate on the overall balance of things and the vocals, because they're the things most likely to change on a night-to-night basis. When we were in pre-production, Andrew Lloyd-Webber would occasionally pop in during rehearsals and ask for a slight change to the mix in the pre-recorded overture. I could tweak it, save it knowing that that the mix won't change and the composer will be happy."



Nick makes some room for a few more Sound Operators to join him in his little box

Kelly Jones

Lead singer in the Stereophonics
Words: Robin Johnson, *Live!* Magazine

When Kelly Jones took to the road last month on what was ostensibly a 'one-man-and-acoustic-guitar' tour of the UK and Ireland – he made sure he packed his Roland VM-System...

As Roland VM Product manager, it's unsurprising that Paul O'Brien feels it makes the live recording process easier! "If you use the Roland VSR-880 recorders with the VM system, you don't have SMPTE or MIDI timecode to worry about, so there's no timing or sync problems. They actually become part of the VM system. All of the display pages for the hard disc recorders are on screen. You arm the tracks press record on the desk and it just works. There's no messing with it, normally with a rack full of outboard or a load of tape you're worrying if everything's armed or is working."

The system uses C-Console software, which allows the operator to monitor different meter bridges. "Not only can I see what's coming in from the stage box, I can also monitor what's going down on hard disc and what's coming back from the hard disc. I can reference it to all points and I know exactly what's going on. It makes life a lot easier." Paul's very confident about the future for the consoles, "I spent ages banging on peoples' doors about the VM mixers, and now people are coming to me. All it'll take is for one to be used on a high profile tour and I'm confident they'll take off for the front of house and monitors in the live touring market."

Peter Oxendale

Songwriter, Musical Director, Producer & Musicologist

Peter has just bought over £18,000 in Roland gear for his new studio and reckons that his best investment to date has to be his VM-system

"When I started building my studio I realised that technology had moved on so much, I didn't need a massive SSL desk with flying faders and a live area. I went for

the VM system, which is small in comparison, but just as powerful. Not only does it sound fantastic, it also looks great. I couldn't resist it and I went out and bought the full system.

I got the VMC-7200 with two VM-7200 controllers fully loaded with effects. The VE-7000 Channel Strip Controller. A pair of DS-90A monitors. Two XV-5080's which are both fully loaded with expansion cards, which I've linked up via the R-Bus connectors to the desk. And I've updated to a MC-80EX which is great for the live work that I do, my MC-500 was stolen so it was the natural choice to update to. I also have an SRV-3030D in the rack.

I'm hoping to link the whole system up with the MAC G4 733 with a Cinema display, when I get the G4 I'll have my ultimate set-up."



Peter Oxendale at his studio

MIXING



Below: Kelly Jones
Below right: Paul O'Brien



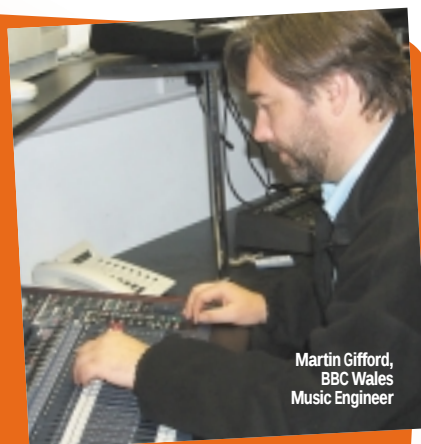
Martin Gifford

BBC Wales Music Engineer

Martin Gifford is sat behind two new VMC-7200 systems drinking a cup of coffee and relaxing. In just a few hours a live performance from the Welsh National Opera will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3

"We would normally need at least two full-blown technical rehearsals to ensure the levels were correct for broadcast. But the VM system can store all our input and output settings onto a Smartmedia card. We were able to come into the theatre today, link up all the microphones to the processor and know that all the levels were pre-set and ready to go. We only need one pre-production rehearsal, and we don't have to go through the rigmarole of completely re-setting levels on site. It's already saved us time and money. We're using two desks, not combined. One is being used as the orchestral balance and the other is designated as the stage balance and main mixer.

The orchestral balance is fed from the digital output of the one processor to the digital input of the other processor, which is how the



Martin Gifford,
BBC Wales
Music Engineer

two are combined. That gives us more flexibility. For instance, two people can be mixing simultaneously, rather than trying to do the whole thing on one desk; although the desk is capable of running all channels.

The two processors are in the orchestral pit so all the cables are run back to the processors and are linked by a special VM-Link cable that I have had made.

We take the recordings back to the studio after rehearsals and listen to the tracks to see if any of the microphones need to be re-located or changed. We've set it up so it's the best system to use for a live transmission."

Gary Bromham

Producer

All of Gary's work is now generated from his VM system

"My whole set up is based around the VM-7200 system. I have one VMC-7200 console with 2 VM-7200 controllers which gives me 96 channels of input to play with. Both the processors are fully-loaded with effects boards so I hardly use any of my old analogue gear any more.

The VM is set up with the main output bussed into Logic so at the end of every day when people ask for a rough mix I can dump a copy off which conforms to the

actual mix on the Mac. If we need to change arrangements quickly it makes life easier. I love the patch bay on the VM, it's so flexible. I send Midi Timecode from Logic to the desk, then I send MMC from the desk back to Logic. That way the transport controls on the desk can stop/start logic.

The system is set up like a 24 buss mini SSL. Because I use most of the 96 inputs, I use different templates for the different projects I'm working on. I currently use Smart Media cards, but I'll soon be changing over to Sound Diver 3 which means when I save a Logic song, it will save all the settings and templates as well.

Once you've re-programmed yourself to work in a slightly different way, the system is very intuitive. My Mackie desk is now propping open a door in the corridor."



Gary Bromham,
Producer

Pete Townshend: at the height of another explosive performance

Roger Daltrey: memorable as the legendary 'Tommy'

Zak Starkey: son of Ringo Starr

Who's Who?

John 'Rabbit' Bundrick joined The Who back in 1979 for a one-off tour, and he's been hammering the ivories for the band ever since. We met Rabbit and the band on the final night of their 2000 tour in Wembley arena

Interview: Aubrey Parsons Pictures: Mark Bradwick

John 'Rabbit' Bundrick may not be the first name that springs to mind when you think about keyboard players but his performances can be heard on many well-known albums. Not many people can say they were there at the beginning of Bob Marley's career, or claim to be one of the founder members of Free. I met up with Rabbit on the last night of The Who's 2000 tour. So how does it feel to be still touring?

"It's been great being out on the road again. Working with The Who is and always will be special. I've been playing with them since 1979, just after the *Quadrophenia* album came out. I do feel kinda sad to be finishing the tour tonight, but I'm looking forward to going back and spending some time at my home in Somerset."

When he's at home Rabbit doesn't stop working, he spends most of his time composing, playing and recording...

"I compose every day. If I'm not working with anyone else, then I spend time writing new material. I've got hundreds of pieces of music. I write quite a lot of stuff for music library companies. People can buy the CD and use the music in any way they want. I only get to see where the music's been used when the royalty cheques come in. My stuff's been used on TV programmes and commercials all over the world. It's even been used on a *Dungeons & Dragons* computer game, although I've never actually played the game."



John Entwistle: a master at work

John 'Rabbit' Bundrick: had the grooviest flatmate of the 70s



Stirring it up

Back in the early 1970s, Rabbit shared a house with none other than Bob Marley.

'At our house in Sweden, we each had a bedroom where we would do our own songwriting and generally live out our egos. It was like a songwriting factory. As you walked through the house, you would hear a conglomeration of different types of music all fighting for the same ear space. Out of Bob's room came the rawest guitar and vocal sounds my ears have ever heard. I was always amazed at the amount of smoke that used to appear from under his door! After I moved to England, I met up with Bob again and worked on the *Catch a Fire* album. You can hear me on *Stir it up*, although I never received a credit.'

Hailing from Baytown, Texas, Rabbit's musical interest kicked off at the age of seven when his parents bought him a piano. High School was a further indicator of the road Rabbit would take in the future – he failed all his normal mandatory classes but made straight As in music.

"I also chose bowling as a sport in college because you got to leave the campus, drink beer and hang out at the bowling alley. So college for me revolved around music, bowling and beer!"

Rabbit's musical background was very much influenced by his family's love of Country and Western music.

"Whenever I go home to see the folks, all the family gets together and we sit around, drink beer and play country music all night – brilliant. They still have the piano they bought me when I was a kid!"

I asked Rabbit what kind of music influenced him now...

"I don't listen to other people's music any more. I record and listen to everything I do. Every rehearsal and performance with anyone I work with is recorded. I listen back to them so I can judge how well I have played. If my work isn't up to scratch, I want to hear what I'm doing wrong so I can do something about it"

During The Who's tour, Rabbit's main piano was the Roland RD-600. "I built my rig around the RD-600 because I love the playing action and the sound quality is fantastic. I give the piano a real hard time

during the performance. I'm not a percussive player, but I'm up and down those keys at a rate of knots!"

This was confirmed by Rabbit's performance during the song You'd Better You Better You Bet. I was in the audience, not too far from his stage position, and I was amazed at the speed and clarity of his note-perfect performance. It has to be said that there are not many live performers of the Who's calibre around today.

Wembley arena has rocked to the sounds of many bands and once again the Mod-rockers proved that it's not just the youngsters that can kick it. Rabbit let us in to a little secret...

"Pete's just finished writing the new album, I think I'll be dusting off my RD-600 again sometime next year..."

Will PowerOn be there? You'd better, you better you bet. ■

Who's The Who?

Roger Daltrey
Vocals

Pete Townshend
Guitar & Vocals

John Entwistle
Bass & Vocals

Zak Starkey
Drums

John 'Rabbit' Bundrick
Keyboards & Vocals

Who's Who?

Rabbit's worked with the best of the best; here are a few names you might just recognise...

Bob Marley
Free
Crawler
Who
The Strawbs
Roger Waters
Donovan
John Martyn
Sandy Denny
Eric Burdon
Hank Wangford
Mick Jagger
Richard Thompson
Geoff Whitehorn
Dave Gilmore
Wayne Perkins
Brian Eno
Simon Townsend
Johnny Nash
Ralph "Streets of London" McTell

What's in a name?

"Somebody in the band said that I looked like a rabbit. Then the whole band started teasing me because of my teeth and they all started calling me Rabbit. That's how I got my nickname and it's just stuck ever since."

Want to know more?

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When The Lion feeds

Disney's *The Lion King* is a production that looks like selling out for many years to come. Why the success? The music, the stage set, the costumes, the choreography, and of course the rhythms. Behind that sound are Roland's incredible V-Drums. PowerOn speaks to the musicians behind the groove:

The Kit Drummer

Andy Newmark



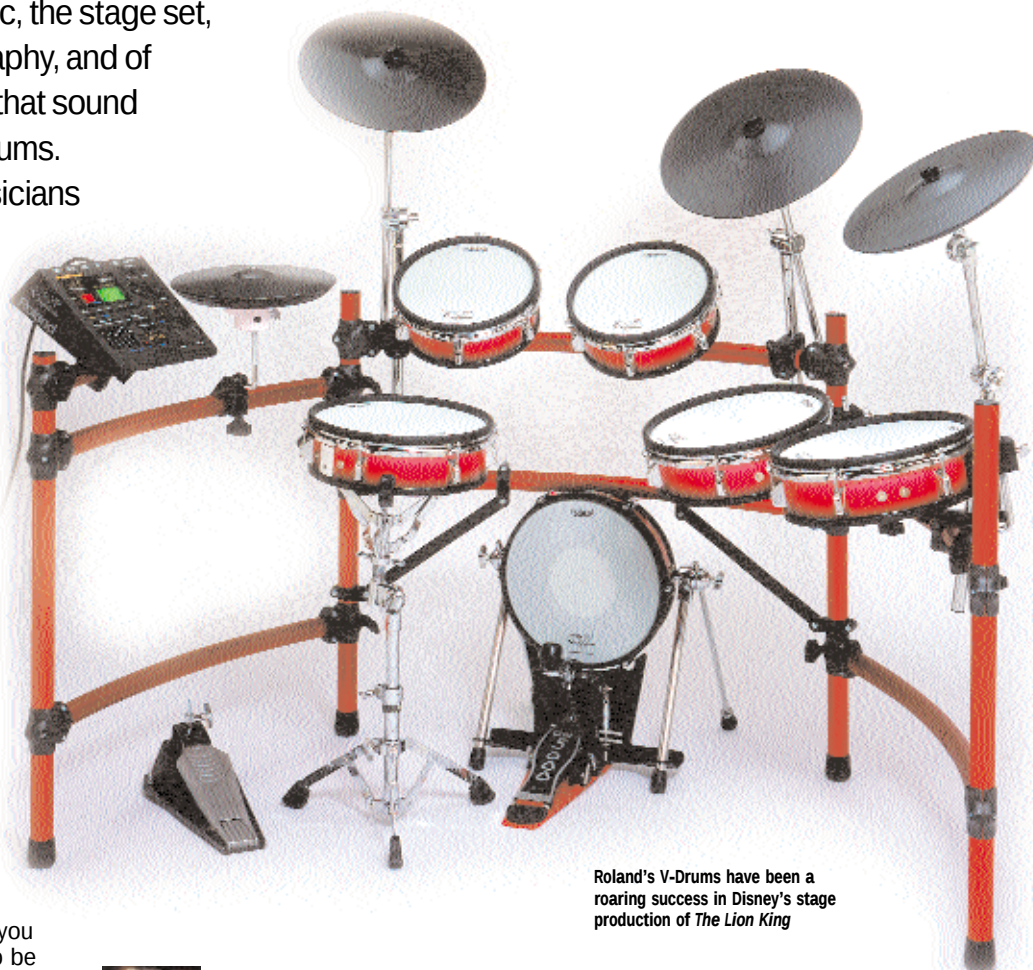
"It's been a big stretch for me, just playing all the different drums. I normally play a four-piece kit, but here they've got me playing woodblocks, china cymbals, cowbells and electronic drums. There was a point at which I didn't think I could cut it. I'd jumped in at the deep end and I really thought for a moment 'I'm not going to get through this! I've got to play with authority and lead the band, but I have to do it within the context of following the conductor first. You've got to leave a piece of yourself to be manipulated by an outsider who's right on you. The drum seat here is the hot seat. He's on me every second of the show, so you have to release a part of your brain to be controlled by him for tempo, dynamics and everything. Every night it's different with him; he really wants to steer the orchestra, and he does – it's a Ferrari when he conducts. The other guys are watching him as well, so no-one's personality or personal wishes ever supersedes the team."



The Percussionist

Thomas Dyani

"The music is challenging, the show is beautiful, and I get to watch it every night. I feel I'm really part of something big, something nice, and it is definitely a percussionist's dream score. The show is very much a replica of the New York Broadway show, what they did there, we had to do, and we started out with the same instruments. But no two productions are the same; the room is different, some things sound different, it's also very hard to get, Nigerian ankle shakers that sound the same for example."



Roland's V-Drums have been a roaring success in Disney's stage production of *The Lion King*



The Percussionist

Mike Hamnett

"I provided the congas and the djembe and a few bits of hand percussion, and Disney provided the rest through people like Johnny Roadhouse, Impact, LP, Pat Till... and the canes come from Winchmore Hill Garden Centre! The only thing is, they've covered some of my stuff in this cloth to fit in with the visual ambience, which is a bit strange."



The Mallet Percussionist

Chris Baron

"I've always considered myself to be a drummer with just a little percussion, although now there's more of an equal balance...there's a little bit of room for improvising on the marimba, and I suppose the African percussion isn't really reading, it's just locking into the

grooves. On hand drums there's very little improvisation, but there's a chance for doing your own thing slightly on the marimba because it's a rhythm part."



The Kit Drummer's Dep

Darby Todd

"I saw the show and decided I wanted to do it, so I took the charts to look over. I also recorded the entire show on minidisc so I could go home and work at it with the charts, and I also had a tape of Tommy Igoe, who did the Broadway version of the show. I listened, took it in, learned it, and I must have come in a dozen times and just sat in the booth, watching Andy and the conductor. I worked on it for three and a half weeks before I took the show on." ■

Who wants to be a ...musician?

Josh Phillips always had a passion for music so when his careers officer told him he'd make a good metalworker he was even more determined to break into the industry. He's worked with Alisha's Attic and Bryan Adams. Now he's writing music for TV. Aubrey Parsons asks him how it's done...



AP How did you get into TV work?

JP My fiancée, Emma Elsworth is the Producer on Ant & Dec's *Friends Like These*. I offered to write some music when she was working on the pilot show. I did the work for free on the understanding that if the programme took off, I would get the gig. The show took off and I ended up writing the music for the first series with a friend of mine, Barrie Guard. On the second series, I wrote all the incidental music and sound effects for the games. It was a little easier. We had already written the theme tune so I had a much better idea of how the music should 'feel'. The only problem was the show was filmed live, so I had to write the incidental music before the show. I was given the following brief: Twelve pieces of music to be played while a game is in progress. Each piece of music to last two minutes.

A range of styles ranging from tense and exciting to up-tempo and light-hearted.

AP What gear did you use for the show?

JP We used two Roland JV-1080s which gave us 32 tracks of midi. We also used a lot of the expansion cards like the Techno and Hip-Hop boards. This made life much easier because we were able to take the loops from the boards and mess around with them. It was like having some of the ground work already prepared. Those boards are so inspiring because you can pick a patch, hit a key and you're

off! They're a great starting point. The whole set up comprises of Logic Audio on Mac G4, with 2 JV-2080s, a couple of S-750 samplers, a mother keyboard all running through a SoundCraft desk to a 24 track Radar (hard disk recording system).

AP How much material do you have to write per show?

JP Well, we wrote a stock pile of music over a period of a few weeks which we were able to call upon show by show. Every now and again there would be a special feature like 'Walk of fear' which would require a certain type of music. So I would have to write an extra piece. You quite often hear the BladeRacer sound from the JV-1080. Some of the music is the same every week though, like when they introduce the contestants.

Josh Phillips has written music for:
Big Country
Alisha's Attic
Bryan Adams
Midge Ure



AP Is any of your music influenced by the charts?

JP I try not to do that. I think it's more fun when you have to come up with something that is completely original. I don't want to be accused of plagiarism. To be honest that's half of the problem with the charts these days. Everyone is using off-the-shelf sounds. Not many people can be bothered to

program their gear any more.

AP Any words of wisdom for anyone thinking of getting into writing music for TV?

JP Always persist. Don't give up. Knock on doors – one will open sooner or later. Although there is an element of 'who you know', your work will be recognised if you have talent. Producers do listen to music. They will listen to it because they're not inundated by demos like record company A&R people. If you are sending unsolicited work, make sure it is in the 'style' of the show you are aiming at. You never know, the phone might ring... 

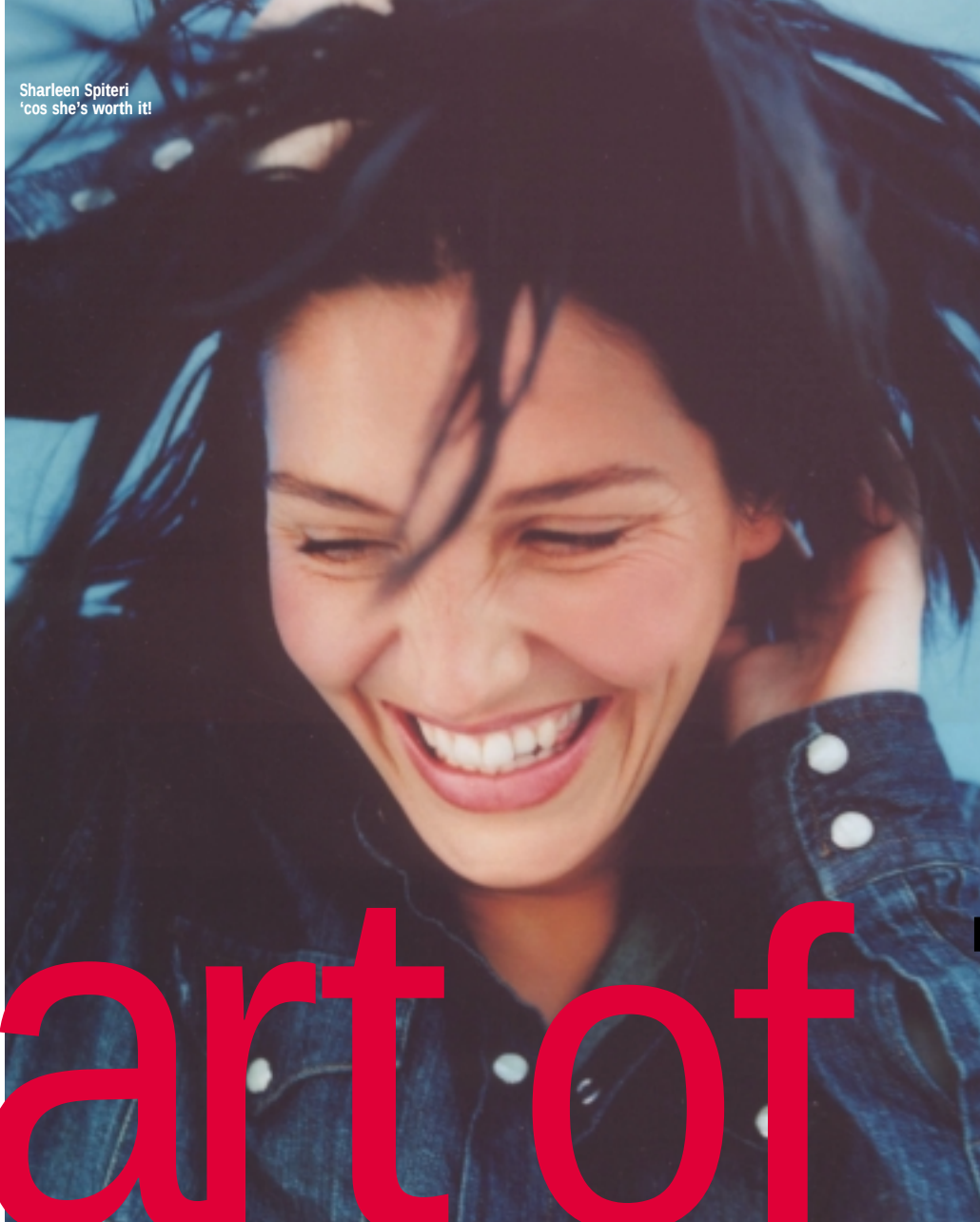
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Texas are currently touring the UK with their Greatest Hits album. Aubrey Parsons met up with keyboardist Eddie Campbell and drummer Steve Washington, who are both using Roland gear for the gigs and delved deep into the...

heart of

Sharleen Spiteri
'cos she's worth it!



Steve Washington – Drums

Two days after we interviewed Texas at John Henry's, drummer Mykey Wilson left.

His replacement, Steve Washington would still be using the TD-10 V-Drum brain, but it would be triggered from his acoustic kit. We met up with Steve at the CIA as the band were running through the final sound checks for the night's concert



New boy: Steve Washington

Who have you worked with?

I did all of the drum work for Take That and I did the last Wet Wet Wet tour before they split. I've been working with Nick Kershaw over the last few years and I've done a couple of albums with him. And now of course Texas.

How long have you been playing?

I started when I was 11 and turned professional when I was 13. I've toured the clubs and I've worked with the Reggae Philharmonic Orchestra. I've been involved with the Princes Trust on their Sounds Live courses. And I also teach. I've taught at LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts) which is Paul McCartney's place.

What endorsements do you have?

Premier Drums, Paiste Cymbals and Vater Sticks.

Mykey's kit was a hybrid of V-Drum pads and acoustic drums. You are an acoustic drummer, but I noticed that all the drums have triggers attached...

I need to be able to emulate sounds from the original recordings so the whole kit is triggered up to a TD-10 brain. I don't really have to think about what I'm doing because

Eddie Campbell – Keyboards

Despite not being in the original line up, Eddie can be seen playing keyboards in the video for the band's first UK hit single 'I don't want a lover'. We caught up with him at John Henry's in London where the band was in full production rehearsals for their Spring 2001 tour

How did you start playing?

My big brother had David Bowie's Hunky Dory album and I fell in love with it big time. I saved up and bought a Crumer piano, but it had four dead keys which I had to avoid when I was playing it. I learned Life On Mars and it took me about three years. I was only about 13 or 14. In those days, everything was on tape or vinyl, so I'd sit rewinding and playing the tape over and over again until I had learned the song. I don't read a note of music.

How long have you been with Texas?

12 years now. It's great fun because everything's just kicked off again with the Greatest

Hits album. I'm looking forward to the tour. We've been eating lots of curry and keeping ourselves well 'watered' in preparation for it.

You have a heck of a lot of Roland gear in your keyboard rig. Why did you choose us?

I love the JV and XV series. The sounds that Roland produce are unbeatable. The JV's are great for live work. I can put a performance in and put a pad up an octave or a piano up two octaves. It saves having 20 keyboards on stage. I'm using the A90-EX as a controller, but I also use the internal piano sounds.

What about the VK-7?



The VK-7 is great, I love the overdrive on it. The reverb is fantastic, I love the clinky sound you can get on it.

I noticed that in rehearsals you have the VK-7 DI'd and straight in to the PA. Is that how you will use it live?

Yes and no. We're hoping to connect it up to a Leslie from the Leslie output on the back of the VK-7, but to be honest it sounds fantastic running directly into the rig – the Leslie emulation is awesome.

What are your plans after the tour?

I think we'll be straight back in the studio when the tour finishes. We don't want to hang around. It's best to do it this way because if you stop something, it's harder to get back into again. ■

Pics: Mark Bradwick

Texas

Alan (Moffat – Drum Tech) changes the patches between songs. I don't normally use electronic gear, but I will if the band I'm working with want me to.

You came in at the very last minute for this tour...

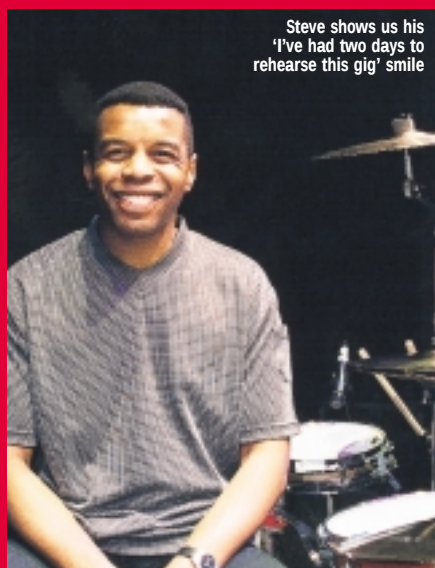
Yes, I got the call on the Friday. I arrived at Newcastle Arena on Saturday afternoon and started rehearsing. Monday was the first gig. I charted up all the songs as soon as I arrived. Then on the Monday morning, I whittled all the parts down to one piece of A4 paper (which is now stuck to Steve's drum stand!). Then I was ready!

Did you get butterflies before the first gig?

I'd be lying if I said the first gig wasn't a bit nerve wracking, but you just deal with it. I wanted to perform and play well. I did a lot of homework and the rehearsals were relaxed. Even though there was a lot going on and there was a lot to remember it was cool.

Did you celebrate after the first gig?

Not after the first one, I waited until after a couple of gigs in. I wanted to make sure everything was OK before I partied!



Steve shows us his 'I've had two days to rehearse this gig' smile

Will you stay if they ask you to?

Yes I would. It's a good gig and they're a great bunch of people to work with. The band, crew, bus drivers and everybody else that's working on this tour is really chilled. And another thing the on tour catering is excellent, we're very well looked after. I eat a lot better when I'm out on tour! ■

The Band

Sharleen Spiteri – Vocals
Johnny McElhone – Bass
Ally McErlaine – Guitar
Eddie Campbell – Keyboards
Mark One – Scratch DJ
Tony McGovern – Guitar
Steve Washington – Drums
Nicole Patterson & Charlotte Hudson – Backing Vocals

Roland kit list:

VS-1880+P
JP-8080
VK-7
V-DRUM KIT
XV-3080
A90-EX

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Aubrey Parsons asks singer-songwriter Davey Ray Moor about his love of the VS-1680

Eastern promise



Davey Ray Moor, Cousteau

AP Where are you from?

DRM I was born in the Middle East and lived there as a child, but did most of my growing up in Australia. I came over to the UK as soon as I could.

AP Your current CD is titled *Cousteau*, how did you get the record deal?

DRM In the beginning nobody would sign us. Then there was this one guy in town, Trevor at Global Warming who said he would put it out if we recorded it and did all the artwork ourselves. He wanted the full package to keep things as fuss free as possible. We got good press, then we played on Jools Holland's show. All of a sudden the album sold out everywhere. Palm Pictures picked up on the success (in fact they helped us with funding for the original recording) and they signed us. (At this point Davey hands me a copy of their re-released self-titled CD...)

AP How did you record the album?

DRM We used a VS-1680. It was great for us because it's just so portable. A friend of mine, The

AP How would you describe the album?

DRM It's a real woman's thing judging by the demographics and the research; They think it's really cool. Blokes seem to get very suspicious about the whole thing. It's kind of venerable in it's own way; elaborate, tender and intense.

Want to know more?

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Professor, has a recording studio called Magneto in Leytonstone which is in the basement of his mum's house. He gets great drum sounds. So we recorded all the rhythm tracks in the studio and dumped them onto the 1680. Then we recorded the rest of the album at my place and Robin's (the guitarist) place. We mixed it on the 1680 and dumped the mix down to DAT and pressed the CD from that. For the re-release, we re-recorded the drums in Magneto and dumped them back on the VS because we had a new drummer. Then we took the VS to a big studio, dumped all the tracks on to two-inch tape and re-mixed.

AP How did you master the album?

DRM Out of the VS-1680, into a TC Finaliser and then on to a DAT. We chose DAT because we found that burning a master to a domestic CD burner caused SCMS (Serial Copyright Management System) problems. We also had phasing problems, so we decided to master to DAT. We sent the DAT off to Trevor at Global Warming and they printed it up.

AP When was the album released?

DRM It was released in November 2000 and it's doing pretty well. We released a single from the album called *Last Good Day of the Year*; it didn't go ballistic on Radio One, although Mark and Lard made it single of the week. Everything you hear played on the radio was all recorded on the VS.

AP What are you working on at the moment?

DRM Well, I've got the old workhorse out (VS-1680) and we're demoing a new album on it.

AP Why did you choose the 1680?

DRM The VS won hands down. I wanted a system that could be used like an extra instrument. Something with a hands-on feel, proper buttons you know? Using

the VS is a process that I find very musical. Even just reaching over and pressing a button is good for my creative process. I've even been thinking of building a studio based around a 16 or 24 track workstation with a stand alone sequencer. The great thing about a system like that is the whole thing can be put in a suitcase and taken anywhere. Computer based systems are still so unreliable. I was worried about incompatibility problems. I didn't want to end up just another white man yelling at a beige box... I'll tell you another good thing about it – I can't hear the compression. Louis Armstrong said 'If it sounds good, it probably is good'. When I record an acoustic guitar, that's what I get on the disk.

AP What are your plans for the rest of the year?

DRM This year got off the blocks pretty well. We tick over in a cult-ish fashion in the UK. Meanwhile, the album is huge in France. The next big thing is the US release in April. We're hoping to set up a tour out there to coincide with the release.

AP Many of the bands I talk to have already climbed the ladder of success, you are still fighting your way at the moment. What would you say to other bands that are searching for stardom?

DRM We're older blokes playing weird, intense and slow music compared to the pre-packaged pop pretenders. It helps if your fundamental thing is very focused; if you can answer the question 'Your band is a...' Often, bands overcomplicate their genius by spreading their ideas and styles too thinly. You need to distil what is essentially you. ■



Two more bands have beaten a path to our door for inclusion in this issue of PowerOn. **The Lovelies** and **Origin Red** are both already on the road to success and wanted to tell us how Roland equipment helped them create the right sound for their bands...

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If music be the food of love

After forming as a pop trio in the early 90s, Petersfield band The Lovelies have recently been enjoying the success they feel they deserve, with just a little help from Roland...

"We toured the UK just before Christmas and managed to play 28 gigs in just over a month. We played loads of Universities and a number of HMV gigs to promote our single *Country Turn*," says front man Toby Thomson.

"We got hold of a stack of Boss pedals for the tour. It's great to know that some things in life are built to last; Boss pedals are no exception. They sound great and take such a kicking when we're on tour, but they just keep on going."

The Lovelies' brand of infectious guitar-driven pop, with soaring melodies and intelligent lyrics, has made them household names in Spain and Japan. They now have their sights set firmly on the UK.

With recent radio play from X-FM, John Peel and Steve Lamacq and an appearance in the new Channel 4 series *Los Dos Bros* (to be broadcast March/April 2001) the band have decided to increase their musical armoury with the addition of a VS-1880.



"The band have been advised to release a new single immediately owing to the success of *Country Turn*. The VS-1880 will be an invaluable tool for recording the new work" says Manager Simon Earl.

As well as the TV appearances and their new single, The Lovelies will be undertaking a 26-date tour during spring 2001. Check out their web site for more details:

www.lovelies.co.uk

Clip from *Los Dos Bros* Channel 4



Origin Red

When you come across a band whose music is described as 'electronic based funk rock/dub/dance' you know you're in for a treat. And when all of the terms are used at once you know you just have to go and find some of their music and listen to it! Simon Rinaldo, keyboards, spoke to us about being in Origin Red, an experience that has seen the five-piece band go from 'Blunderherd' to 'must be heard.'

Fusion is the key to Origin Red's sound and the band use a healthy amount of Roland equipment to achieve the dub and groove sound they're renowned for, "We've found that the only way to keep the sound realistic and vintage is by using good digital equipment" says Simon. "For most of the synth stuff I play the JP8000. The machine sounds great, one minute it can sound beautiful on apad or Solina type string ensemble and the next it sounds sharp and dirty for Moog and ARP style leads. And the JP8000 seems to have a character all of its own – just like the old analogue kit of the 70s – but it is 100% reliable and stays in perfect tune. This is essential for a live band."

The band have already played over 112 gigs, incorporating four tours in Germany – and the live



experience is well worth catching them for. "This is one of the best white bands playing black music (written by the band themselves) they're a credit to the live scene" – fan's review Feb '01.

Check out Origin Red's website for more details:
www.peoplesound.com/artist/originred

THE BAND

Lee Vernon – Vocals
Gawain Simons – Guitar
Simon Rinaldo – Keyboards
Rob Foster – Bass
Glen Clarke – Drums



FORTHCOMING GIGS

29 April: Boston Clipper, Northampton
10 May: Punch & Judy, Northampton
23 May: Rafferty's, Wellingborough
16 June: Danny's Bar, Northampton
23 June: Blue Boar, Oxfordshire

GEAR LIST

XP-50
JP8000
VK-77
DD-5
VS-840